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## Part Nine

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PART NINE

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# NATIONS OF TODAY

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# FRANCE AND CIVILIZATION

By Paul Perigord

IN modern times particularly it would not be true to call any one country first among the nations. It can be said, however, without fear of contradiction, that France has played a part in the preservation and development of culture which, from the point of view of duration and quality, is not surpassed by any other modern nation.

Among the provinces of the Roman Empire, through her exceptional geographical location, her material resources, the energy and intelligence of her people, she already held first place. It is to her, says the historian Thierry, that in the deluge of barbarism Providence intrusted civilization with the commission of giving it back later to the world.

We do not propose to relate how France fulfilled that mission throughout the ages with Clovis, Charlemagne, Charles Martel and St. Louis. We wish to concentrate our attention in this article on the last three centuries.

## Middle Ages

Merely as an introduction to our study we shall recall the influence of France during the Middle Ages. In the twelfth century, while she was building the cathedrals and directing the Crusades, half of Spain was still Mohammedan; the Germanies, the Swiss Cantons and the Italian States were ill defined within the limits of the Holy Roman Empire; the Norman kings dominated neither Scotland nor Ireland; Russia was hardly heard of and Central Europe had not yet received the visitation of Islam. Between the vague Europe of yesterday and the uncertain Europe of today, France has remained herself.

For hundreds of years after the eleventh century the struggle of royalty against feudalism and for the unification of the whole country formed the basis of French history. From the thirteenth century onward, and especially

after the Hundred Years War, France is indisputably a state and the leading state in Europe.

She is the first in date on the continent: for as yet there is no Germany: there is as yet no Italy; there is as yet no Spain. She is the first in power, for France's only rival, the England of that day, has the mortal enmity of the Scotch, of the Irish and of the Welsh, and is neither so large nor so populous nor so wealthy nor so triumphantly active as France.

There also occurred in this formative period from the eleventh century on, a remarkable outburst of artistic effort in all directions. Of all the vernacular literature of the Middle Ages the French is the most original, the most pleasing, and the only literature which exercised a universal influence.

In the matter of the arts of architecture and decoration the French style, the Gothic, was not at all confined to France. Mediæval monuments built beyond the French borders by Frenchmen or in imitation of French models are found everywhere: in Castile, Bohemia, Hungary and Palestine.

Numerous texts bear evidence that French fashions and manufactures in matters of costume and ornament were received outside of France with no less favor than French art and literature.

Moreover, during this period it was to the schools of Paris that the most gifted clerics of all nationalities came to finish their studies in literature and theology. A list has been drawn up of well-known men of the thirteenth century who, later, belonged to the University of Paris either as teachers or as students; the greatest names in the history of the Church and the mediæval thought are found in this list.

## The Sixteenth Century

The sixteenth century gives the world three writers of the first rank: Rabelais, Montaigne and Calvin. Rabelais, prince of buffoons, and at the same time the deepest, broadest and bravest thinker of his time, typifies in a remarkable way the Renaissance because of his broad toleration in

religious matters, his insatiable yearning for unlimited knowledge, and, most of all, his indomitable confidence in human nature and the sheer joy of living.

The other great prose writer of the Renaissance in France is Montaigne, who possesses the sedate, unruffled serenity of the cultured man of the world. The real outcome of his gentle skepticism is his magnificent tolerance, so welcome a boon to the age of turmoil and persecution in which he lived. To this day he has remained the favorite of the literary elite throughout the entire world.

Finally, Calvin is another world-man who gave Protestantism its first logical and scholarly declaration of doctrine and who became the spiritual guide of a large section of the Anglo-Saxon world.

## The Seventeenth Century

The sixteenth century had seen religious reformation: the eighteenth was to see political reformation. Placed between two revolutionary ages, the seventeenth century is the literary age of France.

In the seventeenth century no other nation of Europe could exhibit such a magnificent collection of literary productions. Italy and Germany were in complete moral degeneration. Spain still possessed eminent painters and too prolific writers. England had had Shakespeare in the beginning of the century, Milton in the middle and Dryden at the end, but her literature had not gained influence beyond her own island. France, on the contrary, by the recognized superiority of her wit and her taste, forced all Europe to accept the sway of her artists and her authors.

It was a glorious era in French history. As had been her lot in the thirteenth, so again in the seventeenth century France was unanimously acclaimed the intellectual sovereign of Europe, all eyes being turned toward her and all ears listening for her action.

In no other period have the distinguishing characteristics of French intellect and genius, namely, method, logical sequence of ideas and lucidity of style, been so conspicuous. The classical tradition of Greece and Rome was handled by the writers of the seventeenth century with so fine an

insight, so sure a sense of proportion, and so instinctive an art of combining national originality with the inspiration of classical tradition, in short, with such felicity, propriety and skill, as to result in a success almost unparalleled in the whole history of literature.

These great men were the admiration of all Europe in their day and they exercised a very powerful influence over the foreign literature of their time. In Germany the influence lasted for nearly a century. Italy came under French influence after 1650. From the beginning of the eighteenth century Spain was a pupil of the French school. From 1700 onwards England came under French influence in a very clear manner. It is enough to mention Addison, Pope, Waller, Lord Bolingbroke, Lord Chesterfield and Swift as a proof of this contention.

It was in 1660 that Louis XIV actually took up the reins of government and it is customary to date from this event the magnificent era of literary production which is known as the Classic or Golden Age. Just as from the chaos of civil war in the first half of the century there had risen a strong centralized monarchy, so we find also in the realm of art the same tendency toward balance, harmony, simplicity and precision.

The government of Louis XIV, as a result of the crushing of feudalism by Richelieu, had no longer to be busy with civil strife and could devote itself largely to the development of Versailles, of the most aristocratic, worldly, polished and brilliant society that the world has ever known. The magnificent chateau of Versailles, with its classical architecture, its superb tapestries, frescoes and paintings and, above all, its vast gardens, laid out with geometrical symmetry, and adorned with vistas of statues and carefully trimmed shrubbery, can well be regarded as a symbol of the age, not only in political matters but in the field of art and literature as well.

The literature of Louis XIV may seem to us a little cold, restricted and formal in the age of manifold activity which surrounds us, yet we must admit that its qualities of grace, polish, simplicity, clearness and precision have never been surpassed by any period in the history of any nation.

Louis XIV liked to feel that he led the civilization of Europe and that he was the patron of all that was noble in art, literature and science. With his reign are associated many of the most eminent men of genius that the country has ever produced; such poets and dramatists as Corneille, Racine, Molière, Boileau and La Fontaine; such pulpit orators as Bourdaloue, Bossuet and Massillon; such prose writers as La Bruyère, Fénelon, La Rochefoucauld and Madame de Sévigné; such thinkers as Descartes, Malebranche and Pascal; such artists as Poussin and Claude Lorrain.

These men were to France what their contemporaries, Milton, Dryden, Newton, Hobbs and Locke were to England. But they had this advantage, that, at a time when the English writers were hardly known outside of the narrow limits of their island, they, on the contrary, were read, not in translation, but in their own language, throughout Europe and, furthermore, that language was used by the diplomats and sovereigns of every civilized court.

Two of them, Descartes and Molière, deserve special mention because of their international reputation. Descartes is the founder of modern philosophy. He began where the Ancients stopped with the problem of cognition, "By what means do we know?" He opened the door to the idea of progress so essential to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Molière is by common consent of critics acknowledged to be not only the greatest thinker in French literature, but with Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes and Goethe, one of that small company of universal geniuses of all times.

It is impossible in an article of this length to show what each one of the other writers contributed to the understanding of life, to the appreciation of excellence in all fields. The best we can do is to analyze that classical spirit which was the result of the labor of all these remarkable men and women. They created something which may enjoy more or less popularity in each succeeding age, but something which will never die and which, like the age of Pericles, can prob-

ably never be duplicated but can remain a stimulus and an inspiration to future generations.

In the study of classical traits, reason would come first, then art, the social form, and finally, human nature. The idea of reason permeates the Renaissance as that of faith does the Middle Ages and as the idea of Personality characterizes modern times. The classical spirit represented first a return to the richest fund of culture we possess: Greco-Roman antiquity. To this was added a better understanding of man's intrinsic qualities; a psychological grasp of his actual being. Finally, all conflicting ideals were harmonized under the banner of decorum, and women in their various salons gave to the social body ease and grace of expression.

Classicism is at once natural, artistic and rational, but it is opposed to an exaggeration of any one feature. Classicism is the harmonious interworking of life and art. The man of good breeding is considered and balanced in his conduct; he is a man of good taste. He is sensible and knows that the middle course is the best, that it is folly to fly to extremes, that only he is happy who can bring his life into accord with the lives of his fellow men. Humanity is not asked, in Nietzsche's phrase, to surpass itself, but to be itself with the greatest dignity possible. French Classicism is not merely a revival of ancient classicism but an attempt to define man by eliminating from him all that seemed local and ephemeral. This is why Classicism makes such a universal appeal.

Art:—Names in the annals of painting abound in the reign of Louis XIV: Poussin, Le Sueur, Le Brun, Claude Lorrain, Rigaud, Mignard and many others. Critics find that their work suffered from the restraint of Classicism. All these artists lacked the fire and passion of the Italian school; they were over intellectual; they rationalized their conceptions over much and above all they lacked freedom. That is, we must confess it, the weak point in Classicism.

The greatest artist of the period, Poussin, had admirable gifts, a delicate sentiment and a fine sense of grand historic landscape. In the rendering of scriptural subjects he hardly falls short of Raphael.

Claude Lorrain is the undisputed master of what is called the Italian or sunny landscape. Turner, who bequeathed his pictures to the National Gallery of London, requested that two of them should be placed side by side with two masterpieces of Claude Lorrain. They are the two great luminists of modern times.

The best portrait painters of the time were Rigaud, Mignard and Largilliere.

Pierre Puget is the greatest of the sculptors of the seventeenth century.

The Industrial Arts were developed through the founding of the factory of Gobelins where not only carpets and hangings were made but furniture and all kinds of goldsmith ware, as well.

### The Eighteenth Century

Although the eighteenth century ranks far below the seventeenth and the nineteenth in the realm of pure literature, it possesses an importance second to none in the domain of French and European thought. This period saw the conquest of all Europe by French civilization.

The Golden Age of Louis XIV may be called one of artistic development and perfection. The eighteenth century struck out boldly into new and revolutionary flights.

There had never been so earnest a desire for information of all sorts and such a boldness in venturing beyond the beaten tracks as was exhibited in this century. Men had long consoled themselves for abuses by epigrams and for crimes by songs. But now the public mind was becoming more serious and consequently more formidable. The privileges of the aristocracy were questioned. The noblest powers of the French mind seemed turned towards investigations of the public welfare.

In the eighteenth century the philosophy of the Encyclopedists was the philosophy of the civilized world, that is of the King of Prussia and of the German Princes, of the Empress of Russia and of the Swedish aristocracy, of all powerful statesmen of Spain, Portugal, Tuscany and elsewhere. Proofs can not be cited here, but no one can dispute the fact that France was looked upon in the eighteenth

century as a second fatherland; the intellectual home of all educated men.

All this mental work had succeeded in creating in France a new power: a public opinion to whose influence the government began to be subjected. It was desired that the administration be reformed, that the public finances should cease to be given over to plunder, that each person should have some security for his personal liberty and fortune. Religious toleration was demanded and law founded on principles of natural and rational right; in a word, equality before the law, and liberty regulated by right.

The reign which had begun with the *Lettres Persanes* of Montesquieu ended with the *Contract Social* of Rousseau.

In the second half of the eighteenth century all the governments of Europe, aroused and excited by French ideas, recognized the necessity of making many reforms. Kings and ministers set to work; Pombal in Portugal, Ferdinand VI and Charles III in Spain, Joseph II in Austria, Frederick III in Prussia. They reformed the laws, destroyed privileges and abuses, exacted important sacrifices from the nobility and the clergy, but they never thought of reforming themselves. The French Revolution would later see to that; for the moment, however, the movement towards the emancipation of the people had begun.

The writers who, during the eighteenth century, were responsible for giving a new orientation to the thought of the world were Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau. The influence of Montesquieu in turning men's minds towards an ideal of better institutions of government is difficult to overestimate. Voltaire is perhaps the philosopher who has done most to bring about our present form of civilization by his belief in material progress, in the gradual evolution of humanity to a happier plane through scientific discovery and propagation of knowledge. The great contribution of Diderot to the thought of the century was the publication of the famous *Encyclopedia*. He could be called the Rabelais of the eighteenth century for his passionate devotion to knowledge and investigation of the most diversified character.

Taken as a whole, the influence of Rousseau is the

dominating one of this century. Rousseau, teaching the natural goodness of man, the dignity of the individual, the excellence of sentiment, the beauty of the universe, gave to his age a flaming ideal which was destined to set hearts on fire throughout all Europe.

In the field of pure literature, besides the names we have already mentioned, we find writers of exceptional merit like Beaumarchais and Marivaux in the fields of the novel and the drama.

As in the domain of literature, so in the field of art the eighteenth century marked a return to nature, truth and light. The great master of the eighteenth century school was Watteau, the refined colorist, whose palette was as subtle as that of Van Dyke. Boucher, the most prolific of this generation, was an ingenious decorator and a draftsman of rare skill. Fragonard, whom many consider superior to Watteau, was remarkable for his sense of reality and his ingenious variety of motives.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the wearisome frivolity of Boucher and of his imitators brought about a reaction in favor of antique art. David became the dictator of art and produced several masterpieces himself, one of the best known being the portrait of Madame de Recamier. Greuze produced moral and sentimental pictures, perfect examples of the amiable and graceful art of the eighteenth century. The pastellist, La Tour, bequeathed to us a series of most charming faces, remarkable for the delicacy of their coloring. Madame Vigee Lebrun painted with exquisite grace.

Sculpture was ably represented by Lemoyne, Falconet, Pigalle and Houdon.

The most significant effort of France in foreign relations during the eighteenth century was in North America. At the time of the Declaration of Independence of the Thirteen Colonies, France hailed with enthusiasm a revolution which recognized the principles of French philosophy. The three American envoys to Paris, Arthur Lee, Silas Deane and particularly Benjamin Franklin, were the recipients of perpetual ovation. The young nobility, carried away by the philosophical ideas of the time, asked

permission in great numbers to set out for America. The Marquis de La Fayette himself fitted out a vessel which he loaded with arms. Finally, the government entered into an alliance with the Colonies. In October, 1781, Washington and Rochambeau forced General Cornwallis to surrender at Yorktown. In that battle which decided American independence, France had a larger number of soldiers than the American Colonies.

The French Revolution was the establishment of a new order of society founded upon justice—not privilege. Such changes never take place without causing great suffering.

The heritage that the French Revolution gave to the world was of incalculable importance for the progress of mankind. It introduced the dynamic element into society by showing that it was possible to accelerate the rate of progress and to hasten the ripening of history. It made possible political democracy in the royal or republican form. It destroyed economic feudalism, raised the status of the peasantry, and elevated the middle classes to power. Progress, political, social and intellectual, became the battle-cry of the partisians of the revolution everywhere in Europe.

Not long after the great revolution, the eighteenth century ended; an age at once skeptical and credulous, gentle and terrible, light in morals and frivolous in wit, but which produced the great thought that society, as well as man individually, should grow continually better. Whatever may have been its faults, much may be forgiven this century "which in material affairs created the sciences by the help of which man has acquired an unlooked-for domination over nature and singularly increased his prosperity, which in moral affairs secured tolerance, sought for justice, proclaimed rights, demanded civil equality, recommended human fraternity, abolished cruelty in penal institutions, did away with the arbitrary administration of public affairs, endeavored to make reason the guide of the intellect, liberty the guide of governments, progress the ambition of peoples, and law the sovereign of the whole world."

### Napoleon

Although the marvelous and terrible epic of Napoleon the Great left France smaller and drained of blood and gold, nevertheless, he had served civilization by being during these years the soldier of the revolution. Napoleon carried everywhere the spirit of the revolution. By forcing kings of the old stock and emperors to bow before him, he destroyed the old prestige of the divine right of royalty. Spain, Italy and Germany owe him much and, in order to overthrow him, the kings were compelled to proclaim the rights of the people. He himself always recognized his popular origin even in the most glorious moments of his career.

### The Nineteenth Century

The history of France in the nineteenth century is the history of a great effort to restore and reapply the principles of the French Revolution. There were counter strokes and reactions which give an impression of incoherence; but if we look closer we see that the effort has always been made in the same direction, anti-monarchial, democratic and secular.

One might have thought that after the trials of the French Revolution and the labors of the Napoleonic régime, France would lie prostrate and exhausted. We find her, on the contrary, attacking the new problems of reconstruction with undaunted faith and enthusiasm.

The Revolution had destroyed the old civilization and the Empire had failed to establish a stable substitute. The first half of the century was, therefore, mainly taken up by the search for a new balancing principle to maintain the governmental center of gravity; a new literary expression to replace the exhausted Classicism; new religions and philosophies for the consolation of other generations, and, finally, new schemes for the renewal of society and the happiness of mankind.

France again experiments for the whole of Europe to get fresh meaning out of the mystery of existence. This very complex movement will receive the name of Romanticism. Its pervasive force may be centered around its

belief in the expansive power of the individual. It emphasizes the particular where Classicism had emphasized the universal. Individual sentiment, passion, genius, are the order of the day; hence lyric poetry is the predominant form. The whole approach to art is now through the senses and the imagination rather than through reason. Contrary to the eighteenth century, the emphasis is now less on ideas than on artistic inspiration and processes.

It is impossible to give even a summary of the brilliant literary productions of that period which have been the delight of the reading world ever since. We shall quote only an appreciation of the great leader of Romanticism, Victor Hugo, by G. L. Strachey:

"He can conjure up the strangest vision of fancy: he can evoke the glamour and the mystery of the past; he can sing with exquisite lightness of the fugitive beauties of Nature; he can pour out in tenderness or passion the melodies of love; he can fill his lines with the fire, the stress, the culminating fury of prophetic denunciation; he can utter the sad and secret questionings of the human spirit and give voice to the solemnity of Fate."

In order to understand Romanticism we must remember that in the history of civilization there are static ages as it were, ages of stability, when the fundamental principles that rule society are universally accepted, when individuals, institutions and ideas, are classified and organized in a way that seems rational. There may be discontent in such ages; but the general impression is one of repose and order. Such were the two great classical centuries of French civilization, the eighteenth and the seventeenth. There are critical periods, on the contrary, times out of joint, when principles and institutions no longer harmonize, when individuals are torn between their obvious duty to the existing social order and their perhaps higher duty to the aspirations within their own hearts. These are periods of doubt and despair, of revolt and millennial hopes. The beginning of the eighteenth century marks the beginning of one of these critical eras and Rousseau was its prophet. Goethe in his youth, Schiller, Byron, Shelley, and in France, Chateaubriand took up the tale. And that was Romanticism.

To voice the aspirations, the struggles, the disillusions of mankind through such a crisis in an artistic manner is to add a brilliant page to the record of human culture. This France did through a remarkable succession of writers such as Victor Hugo, Lamartine, Chénier, Vigny and Musset.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, France offers the world a list of writers of which any nation can be proud, writers of the greatest diversity of talent and inspiration. They added much to the literary achievements of mankind in its heroic and pathetic search after beauty and truth. We mention here only those who are on the lips and frequently in the heart of every lover of culture. George Sand, Flaubert, Dumas, Daudet, de Maupassant, Theophile Gautier, Francois Coppee, Taine, Renan, Anatole France, Loti, Bourget.

The twentieth century, in spite of the many losses which have been caused by the war, gives promise of being no less brilliant and prolific than the former ones.

Science: It has not been possible in this rapid survey, to enumerate the great men of science whom France has given to the world since the days of Descartes and Pascal, in the seventeenth century. All these tempting names, each one of which might furnish a text for a long discourse, must be passed by in favor of more recent ones. Toward the end of the nineteenth century the contributions of French science were of such moment that the revered names of Claude Bernard, Berthelot and especially Pasteur must be mentioned. No nation has ever produced a purer glory than Pasteur. He more than any other scientist has combined these two qualities, devotion to truth and service to humanity. The germ theory of infection, the cure of rabies, the control of diphtheria, the wonders of modern surgery, all rest upon the discoveries of Pasteur. More recently still in the field of physics, the work by M. and Mme. Curie opened a field of unheard-of possibilities and laid the foundation for a new interpretation of the physical universe.

Art: The most original of the painters of the entire period was Prudhon, one of the most fascinating of the great French masters. Ingres, probably the most extraordinary draftsman of the nineteenth century, executed a

series of portraits in pencil which must always be reckoned among the marvels of art.

Delacroix was the great leader of the Romantic School which voiced the protest against the tyranny of Greece and Rome [Classicism]. He painted with a feverish energy of life and expression, with a deep and poetic sense of color.

France is so rich in artists of talent throughout the nineteenth century that the most that one can do here is to give a partial list of outstanding names: Meissonier, Rousseau, Daubigny, Dupré, Diaz, Rosa Bonheur, Corot, Millet, Courbet, Manet, Monet, Cézanne, Degas, Bernard, Puvis de Chavannes. Surely France has contributed an amazingly large share to artistic expression.

French sculpture in the nineteenth century also reached a high degree of perfection. It is enough to mention the names of Rude, Falguiere, Carpeaux and Rodin to know the value of the contribution of France in that field.

During the period we have studied the field of architecture and of music should also be investigated and one would find abundant evidence that French genius has not neglected these avenues of artistic expression.

### France and Foreign Nations

One of the best demonstrations of the value of the contribution of France to civilization is to go through the various nations of the world and see the regard they have for French culture.

It is natural enough for Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Spain and Italy to appreciate the quality of French civilization, but we find the great rivals of France, England and Germany, likewise paying tribute to her influence. Germany was for several centuries a pupil of France. Roess, a German writer of the Middle Ages, once said, "The French have a providential mission which is the advancement of learning." In 1830 a German savant, Opitz, said, "The Capital of the Germans is Paris." Frederic the Great used French preferably to any other language. Leibnitz and Grimm wrote in French.

For many centuries the Russian aristocracy has known only one kind of culture, French culture.

Poland has been called the France of the East.

In Central Europe there are seventy-five million Slavs, Latins and Greeks who look upon France as a second home. Roumania is one of the best interpreters of French culture. There are in Greece over fifty French schools and colleges. Egypt publishes twenty-three newspapers in French and French schools give instruction to more than twenty-five thousand pupils.

In South America, French is the language of polite intercourse. The French intellectual influence is predominant. In Mexico there are more French books read than there are Spanish.

France is not influential as much through the number of her emigrants as she is through the power of her ideas. France brings out about twelve thousand books a year, or more than thirty every day, and more than half of these are bought by foreign countries.

If there has been in the modern world any parallel to the ancient universality of Greek culture, it has been the diffusion of French culture among the intelligent classes of all countries.

The French have been mediators between the world and foreign civilization: they have excelled in the labor of sifting out what is precious or exquisite in the foreign civilizations with a view to enjoying it themselves and enabling the whole world to enjoy it.

### Foreign Testimonials

It may be well to get from foreign sources a confirmation of that world influence which the writer has claimed for France throughout the major part of her history.

Few Americans have known France better than Thomas Jefferson. His words regarding that country are now classic, "Every man," he says, "has two countries, his own and then France."

Goethe once wrote, "Imagine a city like Paris where all that is of most value in the kingdoms of nature and art from every part of the world is daily open to inspection and all this in a city where for three generations men such as Molière, Voltaire and Diderot have brought into play a

mass of intellectual power such as can never be met with a second time on any single spot in the whole world."

Heine, the great German poet, says, "The patriotism of a Frenchman is such that it enlarges his heart. He holds dear not only his own, not only France, but civilization."

Our own Emerson wrote, "The French have a much greater influence in Europe than the English. The English owe their influence mostly to their wealth and to their strength. The French owe it to their talents."

Nietzsche states, "There is only one true culture, French culture."

An Italian writer, Gubernatis, said in 1891, "Our Italian civilization is older and in some ways superior to French civilization, but French civilization is the most complete in existence, the one which is the most rapidly and profitably appreciated and assimilated by mankind."

### French Women

France owes the special character of her civilization, which so invariably emphasizes charm of manner, refinement in expression, sociability of character, to the influence of women. The more one reads French literature, the more one is impressed by the extraordinary part played by women in the development of French culture. It is true that the main difference between Ancient and Modern times is the participation of women in all forms of public life. It is true, likewise, that what offers the strongest contrast between France and the other European nations is the brilliant and fruitful activity of her women. In every period of French literature whenever we find a king in the field of letters we are quite sure to find also a queen. With Abelard we find Heloïse; with Montaigne, Marguerite de Navarre; with Ronsard, Marguerite de Valois; with Molière, Madame de Sévigné; with Racine, Madame de Lafayette; with Voltaire, Madame du Deffand; with Chateaubriand, Madame de Staël, and so forth. In other countries you will find here and there a woman of talent but in France it is an unbroken dynasty.

This fact has given French civilization an attraction which no other has been able to equal.

## International Spirit

One of the most precious contributions of France is her interest in world unity, her sympathy for the whole of mankind. France believes that her history and her geographical location fit her particularly for that international mission. She brings together the North and the South; she is both ancient and modern.

The first project of a European republic appeared in France in 1623 in the writings of Emmery Crucé: M. l'Abbé de Saint Pierre proposed a second plan in 1713; St. Simon another in 1814. The Convention, the revolutionary government of 1792, declared on behalf of the French nation, "That it would grant fraternity and assistance to all the nations struggling to regain their liberties." Auguste Comte in 1845 formulates a religion of humanity.

France has always thought in terms of humanity, of world civilization.

A few quotations from some of her outstanding writers will prove that point. Montaigne wrote in the sixteenth century: "I hold all men my fellow citizens." Bossuet in the seventeenth century said: "The division of men in nations must not make them forget the universal society of the human race." Fénelon said: "Everyone of us owes much more to humankind, the larger fatherland, than to the particular land of our birth." Napoleon himself said in 1797: "The most honorable occupation as well as the most useful is to help toward the diffusion of ideas."

Lamartine sings the Marseillaise of peace.

Victor Hugo exclaims after 1870: "The dream of Germany is a greater Germany—the dream of France is a United States of Europe."

Pasteur said: "Peace and Science will some day triumph over ignorance and war. The future belongs to those who labor for humanity."

A French professor, Ernest Dimnet, said in an address at Prague in 1920: "France considers as a personal service to her every effort made by other nations to bring into the world a little more light or a little more happiness."

The statement in which France takes special pride came from the pen or rather the heart of Montesquieu. It reads:

"If I knew something beneficial to myself but harmful to my family, I would drive it out of my mind. If I knew something advantageous to my family but injurious to my country, I would try to forget it. If I knew of something profitable to my country but detrimental to Europe, or profitable to Europe and detrimental to the human race, I would consider it a crime."

Is it to be wondered at that the League of Nations should have chosen Paris as the headquarters of the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation?

## Conclusion

It has often been said that the distinctive characteristic of the literary genius of France is good sense and rationality. To these I would add impersonality, for Rabelais and Montaigne, Descartes and Molière, Pascal, Voltaire and Montesquieu write for the whole world quite as much as for their own land. The end which they seek is the truth, their personal enemy is the false, and the immortal types which they sketch belong to humanity even more than to France. In this sense, French literature, like French art, is of all literature the most human because it is the least exclusively national.

This is also the distinctive characteristic of the political genius of France and of its history. That which is extreme does not long continue there. Feudalism stops and retreats before having made the country another Germany, the Communes undergo a transformation before having made it another Italy, so that France has been subjected neither to that feudal anarchy from which the one has escaped only in our own time, nor to that municipal anarchy which so long delivered over the other to foreign domination. Absolute Monarchy, necessary in order to clear the ground, could not by its divine right maintain itself forever as it expected to do, nor can Radicalism make itself eternal by what it dares to call its revolutionary right.

This oscillating and continual advance is what makes the charm of French history because it is recognized as the advance of humanity itself.

That in spite of the criticisms leveled at France in the

twentieth century, she has remained true to her mission, is the conviction of men of culture of whom the late President Eliot made himself the spokesman in 1918:

"Americans have often in times past supposed the French to be an inconstant, pleasure-loving, materialistic people. They have learned through the Great War that the French are an heroic people, constant to great political and social ideas, a people intelligent, fervid, dutiful and devoted to family, home and country. They have also come to see that the peculiar national spirit of France is one of the great bulwarks and resources of civilization which ought to be not only preserved but reinforced."

## MODERN FRANCE

NO political event of the last three centuries has been so productive of results as the French Revolution of 1789. No corner of Europe was sufficiently remote to escape entirely the reverberations of its thunder. Its effects are still visible and no consideration of the growth of democracy can fail to take into account its tremendous influence.

It is convenient to divide the story of modern France into three portions: first, the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries, during which the "Old Régime" survived; second, the period of the Revolution, together with the wars that directly followed; and third, the hundred years and more since the Congress of Vienna attempted to obliterate, so far as possible, the work of the Revolution.

Those who participate in affairs are rarely able to gauge accurately their true significance. Custom and habit are powerful operatives, and familiarity with conditions renders us more or less callous to them. The reader who now reviews the development of France prior to 1789, knowing full well the deluge that was to clear away the abuses of the old order, marvels that those directing the government could have remained so long oblivious to the writing on the wall, inscribed each decade in bolder characters. Yet it may easily be that some future generation shall read with equal amazement of the poverty, crime and misery infesting our land today. Now, as in the age of Richelieu, the rich still waste and the poor want. The prosperous continue on their way, almost unconscious of the wretchedness in their very midst. If the poverty be not so dire or the pernicious effects of privilege so apparent, still the slums of our great cities offer to the most optimistic sufficient food for thought. Therefore it behooves us to view the past without prejudice, realizing that humanity has learned many wholesome lessons in these latter years. The common outlook of mankind has been moulded in no small measure by the teachings of the French Revolution, and throughout the civilized world

the slogan of that mighty movement—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"—has had a transforming influence.

Feudalism lingered long in France. The hereditary rights of the privileged orders were accepted with no less reservation than the theory of the divine right of kings. Despite the fact that the nobles had been shorn of their former political power, the organization of society continued to be feudal. Time had been when laborers could till the soil only under the protection of the baron's knights; to share service and crops with the lord whose power made existence itself possible had been both necessary and just. Service on the one hand—protection on the other: this was the alpha and omega of feudalism.

By the dawn of the seventeenth century a fairly well centralized government had developed. No longer was the protection of baronial armies necessary to resist invaders. Feudalism, which had once been a blessing, had already become a curse. An idle nobility still exacted most of the tolls and services which had been its portion in mediæval times, giving nothing in exchange. Whereas in England only the eldest son was noble, in France all children of the *noblesse* were noble. Together with the clergy, they controlled over three-fifths of the land. Like the clergy, they were largely exempt from taxation, which consequently fell unduly upon the peasantry of rural France and upon the trades classes—the bourgeois—of towns and cities. In addition to supporting the government and bearing the additional burden of frequent wars, the expense of a luxurious court and an extravagant nobility rested upon the Third Estate, as the common people were collectively called.

The merchants and artisans of the towns were restless because of heavy taxes but the most iniquitous impositions were borne by the peasantry. In addition to paying to the government the *taille,* the direct property tax, and the *gabelle,* a monopoly duty levied on salt, they were held down by numerous and vexatious requirements sanctioned by time and custom. They must needs pay toll for the use of the roads and bridges; a portion of their crops belonged to the seigneur on whose estate they dwelt. Their bread must be baked in the seigneur's oven, their wine made in

his press, payment being taken in kind for such privileges. The peasant was not allowed to put his produce on the market until that of the lord had been sold, nor could he protect his growing crops against the wild animals that destroyed them, for hunting was the prerogative of the *noblesse.* At the very season when he needed to attend to his harvest, he was sure to be called away for the *corvée:* forced labor for the improvement of the roads. Forty other requirements were made of him with the result of holding him in abject want. The nobles whiled away their time in Paris, unmindful of those whose toil enabled them to live at ease. In some respects the lot of the peasant was even worse than had been that of his mediæval forebears, for during the Middle Ages the baron had recognized the serfs as a necessary economic factor whose welfare must be taken somewhat into account; whereas the modern seigneur regarded the peasants with contempt, they in turn hating him for his relentless oppression. The condition of the peasants was fairly tolerable in some portions of the realm where nature's prodigality insured general prosperity, but such regions were the exception.

Seldom has a more worthless nobility oppressed a land than existed in France for two hundred years prior to the Revolution. One seeks in vain for patriotic actions or evidences of high endeavor on the part of the prominent representatives of ancient families. Selfishness, greed and avarice were everywhere rampant. The minority of a king was conceived to be the auspicious time to enhance one's personal position and divert as much as possible from the public treasury. At last, when the breaking point had been reached, when the downtrodden rose up against their ruthless oppressors, a pampered nobility escaped wherever possible across the borders, calling upon European despots to restore to them their erstwhile privileges, regardless of consequences to their country which foreign invasion might entail.

In vain did despotic rulers and alliances afterwards attempt to set back the clock of progress and reinstate pre-revolutionary conditions. In 1830 and again in 1848 the people of France revolted to throw off tyranny. Each

revolt sent its tremors throughout the continent and lessened the burdens of the oppressed in some quarter.

The present world owes much to modern France; less stable than Anglo-Saxons, her people have been quicker to catch visions and more eager to pursue them. Heedless of consequences, disdainful of compromise when convinced that they were in the right, nothing has restrained them. Their story is dramatic, for, abhorring dullness and monotony above all else, they have dramatized it at every step. Modern thought bears ineffaceable imprint of their innovations and more often than not the ideas which have revitalized and remagnetized thinkers of succeeding generations have emanated from France. With the possible exception of England, no country has exerted greater influence upon the social and political life of America. For this reason, if no other, it is essential to give particular attention to the story of France in an attempt to analyze our own civilization.

## UNDER THE OLD RÉGIME

### 1. A Weak Sovereign

DURING the sixteenth century religious strife had prevailed, Catholic and Protestant attacking one another with equal fury. In Germany the fearful struggle was fought out in the first half of the following hundred years, terminating in 1648 by the Peace of Westphalia. In France the civil wars waged by Huguenots and Catholics had left the country prostrate. Nearly a million people lost their lives; more than two hundred and fifty towns and villages had been burned. Trade had been destroyed and commerce sadly interrupted. Hatreds and passions being somewhat spent, all longed for peace. By espousing Catholicism, Henry of Navarre propitiated the powerful factions that refused to yield to a Protestant prince; by the Edict of Nantes he pacified the Huguenots, who nevertheless regarded him as a deserter.

Twelve comparatively peaceful years ensued. Henry IV was frugal and his faithful minister Sully guarded the treasury with a jealous eye. Spain had interfered so frequently in French affairs that war with her seemed probable at no far distant time and the aggressions of the Hapsburgs in Austria invited a check. All surplus revenues were carefully stored away for the anticipated emergency, of which the ambitious king hoped to take advantage. But Henry had numerous enemies. The extremists of both Catholic and Huguenot parties hated him for tolerating the worship of the other. Although the Jesuits had been driven for a time from France, they continued their efforts to exterminate "heresy." In mature life Henry had married Marie de Medici, a far less capable member of the old Florentine family than Catherine, whose daughter Margaret had been the wife of his youth. The union of Henry IV and Marie de Medici was ill conceived and so slightly did the king regard his consort that, although they were wedded in 1600, she was not coronated Queen of France

The Well Known Casino of Monte Carlo

A View in Monte Carlo on the French Riviera

until ten years later—not until the very day before his assassination. Under such circumstances it was scarcely strange that her denouncers accused the queen of complicity in the murder, but the accusation was never substantiated.

A less competent queen probably never served as regent. Louis XIII was only eight years of age when crowned in place of his murdered father. The queen regent invited Sully to continue at the helm for the time being. Finding his advice ignored and unable to condone the lavishness with which millions of livres, treasured against a day of need, were now doled out to arrogant princes, he soon retired to fret out his days at the wastefulness which set at naught the ambitions of his late sovereign.

Eager to regain the political power which they had formerly wielded, the more aggressive princes raised revolts which the helpless regent quelled by money. She came to be more and more under the influence of one Concini, an Italian adventurer, who had come to France in 1600 in her train. Finally his presumption ended in his death at the hands of courtiers, who raised the young Louis upon the throne to rule in his own right. Thereafter Marie de Medici exercised no controlling voice in the kingdom and ultimately chose to go into exile rather than remain in the land where her one-time authority was no longer conceded.

During the minority of the king a meeting of the States-General was held, in 1614. This was an advisory body which had been summoned first by Philip the Fair when engaged in a struggle with Pope Boniface VIII. The situation then had been that the king desired to free his realm from foreign interference; yet, threatened with excommunication, he had brought together representatives of the three social orders to advise with him. They had sustained the king in his position. Subsequently the States-General had been convened by rulers at irregular intervals. Sometimes generations elapsed between its meetings, and even the method of choosing delegates would be forgotten. However, the fact that representatives of the kingdom had occasionally been convened was never lost sight of, and when

critical situations arose the States-General was always regarded as a last resort.

The regency felt that such a meeting might exalt the crown, defied as it was by rebellious princes. The prince of Condé had demanded its summons until he perceived that the queen was disposed to concede it, whereupon he sought to discourage such action. To the meeting of 1614-15 the clergy—the First Estate—sent 140 deputies; the *noblesse,* the Second Estate, sent 132; and the Third Estate, 192. The kingdom was divided into twelve territorial districts, each possessing a vote of equal value, regardless of the number of delegates returned. It was customary for each estate to meet separately and prepare a *cahier,* or petition, embodying its wishes and recommendations; these in turn were presented to the sovereign, whereupon the meeting would terminate. No further attention might be given the matter by the ruler or at his will he might sanction some of the reforms advocated. The general tone of these petitions never failed to make an impression upon those in authority and the reluctance to summon the States rose from the fact that all classes took advantage of the occasion to air their grievances rather than to proffer the advice desired by the sovereign. As a rule they were called to sanction an additional tax which prudence counselled might better have their approval than bring the government into odium without it.

After a dismissal in 1615, the States were not called together again until 1789, at which time they soon declared themselves the National Assembly and refused to adjourn. Therefore it is instructive to give attention to the sentiments expressed at this earlier meeting, in order to compare the attitude manifested so many years before the Revolution with that shown later.

The Third Estate asked for a one-fourth reduction of the *taille.* Their speaker said in addressing the king: "What would you say, sire, if you had seen in Guienne and Auvergne men eating grass like the beasts? May I forfeit my position and my place if this is not true?" Another orator of the people compared the three orders to three brothers—"children of their common mother, France. The

clergy the eldest, the nobility the second and the Third Estate the youngest. The Third Estate has always acknowledged that the nobles were somewhat above them, but the nobility should recognize the Third Estate as its brother—not despise it or consider it of no importance."

This speech called forth hot protest from the *noblesse*, who said they did not wish bootmakers and cobblers to call them brothers. One exclaimed: "There is as much difference between them and us as between the master and his valet."

The Third Estate asked for very moderate and much-needed reforms: that the States-General should meet at least once in every ten years; that duties should be collected on the national frontiers and not on the border of every province—the existing system, which worked havoc with trade and made interstate commerce almost impossible. They asked for a reformed judiciary, uniform weights and measures, and, above all, the merchants of Paris, continually called upon to accommodate the government by loans, requested that a public accounting be made of the public funds. To this last proposal one of the bishops expressed the opinion that "finances are like the mysterious sanctuary of the Old Testament, which should not be penetrated."

The clergy endorsed some of the reforms urged by the people, but the nobles boldly demanded that the few financial obligations resting upon them be removed; that government offices be held exclusively for them. They deliberately sought to antagonize the people by requesting that only the *noblesse* be permitted to wear velvets and fine fabrics and in other ways indicated a desire to humiliate the Third Estate.

The representatives of the common people were loath to disband until some assurance should be forthcoming that their requests would be granted, but at length they found the hall where they had held their deliberations closed to them. Such had been the attitude of the Third Estate on this occasion that for one hundred and seventy years no sovereign cared again to summon the States-General.

It was during this meeting that a young bishop gained

prominence, being chosen by the clergy to present its petition—Richelieu, from whom much was destined to be heard subsequently. He won the favor of Marie de Medici and through her influence arose to power. During the years of her exile nothing embittered her more than remembrance of this minister, whose ingratitude she felt to be insupportable. Richelieu conceived his duty to be to his king and country, and, we are forced to believe, to himself.

## 2. Richelieu

Guizot has said: "Great events and great men are the fixed points and peaks of history." Pre-revolutionary France brought forth none greater than Richelieu.

Armand du Plessis de Richelieu was born in September, 1585. He belonged to the lesser nobility of Poitou and looked forward to a career as a soldier; but when a bishopric was bestowed upon his older brother and the latter declined to accept it, Armand determined to take orders and hold the benefice in his family. He went to Rome in 1607 to be consecrated by the Pope. His bishopric lay in Luçon and in a letter to a friend he described it as "the worst bishopric in France, the muddiest, the most disagreeable. . . . There is no place here to take a walk; neither garden nor anything whatever; so that my house is a prison."

Only the painstaking student of his life will wish to search out all record of his obscure years in Luçon, but his first public act was to address the crown in behalf of the clergy in 1615. Years after, he commented upon the futility of this meeting in these words: "The whole work of this assembly had no other effect than to overburden the provinces with the tax to be paid to their deputies, and *to show to the world that it is not enough to know evils if there be no will to remedy them.*"

Discerning Richelieu's keen insight and ability, Marie de Medici called him to the council from October, 1616, until April of the following year. Upon the death of Concini, under whom he had served, Richelieu retired to his bishopric. He acted as adviser to the queen-mother after her alienation from court and, as a reward for his part in effecting a reconciliation between her and the king, Louis

XIII requested that he be given a cardinal's hat. This came after a delay of three years.

Throughout his life Louis XIII could never forget that Richelieu had first come into prominence under Concini; nevertheless, this feeble monarch realized his need of the efficient cardinal, who virtually ruled France from 1624 until his death in 1642. In a survey of his own work Richelieu later recalled the condition of the realm when he assumed control of its affairs, and the aims which he then set for himself:

"When your majesty called me to your councils, I can truly say that the Huguenots divided the state with you; the nobles conducted themselves as if they were not subjects, and the governors of provinces as if they were independent sovereigns. Foreign alliances were despised, private interests preferred to public, and the dignity of your majesty so abased it could hardly be recognized. I promised your majesty to use all my industry and power to ruin the Huguenot party, lower the pride of the nobles, lead all subjects to their duty, and restore the country's name among foreign nations."

Beyond any question, the inexorable minister accomplished his purposes as therein expressed.

Freedom of worship had been long since conceded to the Huguenots, under certain stipulated conditions. However, thirty towns were still held by them in guarantee of good faith. In such places they exercised well-nigh sovereign power, raising armies and holding synods for the purpose of discussing matters of state as well as religion. La Rochelle was almost impregnable and thither flocked discontents when eager to raise revolts. Catholics and Protestants alike turned to the Huguenot party for aid and they trafficed in political difficulties, throwing their power now to one, now to another. In other words, the Huguenots no longer formed a religious division but a political party, constituting what has been termed a state within a state.

Having attempted to interfere in European matters and been interrupted by dissensions at home, Richelieu set himself to the task of reducing the Huguenots to the status of regular French subjects. A long and difficult siege was

necessary for the capture of La Rochelle, and England attempted to send aid to the besieged. The Duke of Buckingham proved to be unfitted for such an undertaking and the English were defeated, while the inhabitants of the city, after gallantly enduring frightful suffering, were at length compelled to surrender. Thereafter the Huguenot party ceased to exist and French Protestants took their place with Catholic subjects or fled over the sea to Holland and England. The persecutions endured by those of the reformed faith and their heroic acts during the trying months of the siege of La Rochelle have sometimes blinded historians as to the necessity of withdrawing political concessions which had been made to them by Henry IV under different circumstances. It is safe to say that no government would consent today to the exercise of such sovereign powers on the part of a portion of its inhabitants.

Richelieu well knew that his future position depended upon bringing this matter to a successful issue and spared no pains to accomplish it. France had no fleet and he was obliged to borrow ships to cut La Rochelle off from supplies. It was necessary to construct a mole across the harbor, which when half done was carried away by storms and had to be rebuilt. For some time the struggle hung in the balance but its conclusion brought him glory.

Evidence was not wanting that he intended to enforce the king's commands among nobles as among other subjects. Duelling had been carried to a dangerous extreme. It was estimated that within a comparatively few years three thousand fell in duels. The first nobles to disregard the prohibition laid upon duelling were hung by the cardinal's command, to the consternation of the *noblesse,* incredulous that men of their rank would be accorded dire punishment. However, enthusiasm for duelling with this form of redress quickly abated.

Having established peace at home, Richelieu turned once more to continental affairs. It so happened that one branch of the Hapsburgs ruled in Spain, and another branch in Austria. Being ardent Catholics, these members of a great house determined to exterminate Protestantism in the north German states. This brought on the struggle known as the

Thirty Years' War, from which, it has often been said, it took Germany a hundred years to recover. Richelieu was ambitious to extend the frontier of France to the Rhine, that natural boundary which has been the coveted possession of various states since the time of the Treaty of Verdun, made by Charlemagne's grandsons in 843.

For many years France was not situated to take an open part in the war waging in Germany. However, it was in response to an offer made by Richelieu that Gustavus Adolphus brought his highly trained Swedish soldiers to the aid of Protestant Germany; for, although an ardent churchman, Richelieu had no desire to see the Hapsburgs enmesh the states of Germany in their toils. Finally, during the latter part of the war, French troops fought against Austria and a war begun for Protestantism ended in a desperate scramble between France and Austria as to which could salvage the more from the general ruin. Soldiers were seldom paid in these years. Their reward came in the sack of cities and in pillaging of districts through which they passed. As to Catholic or Protestant forces, there was no choice when it came to plunder and pillage, and the sad condition of the regions devastated by both armies excited the pity of travelers for many years.

A biographer has said: "The fame of Richelieu can only increase with the years and centuries; he is of those who have most contributed to give consistency and unity to a great nation which, in itself, has too little of them; he is, under that head, one of the most glorious political artisans that ever existed, and the more the generations are battered by revolutions and ripened by experience, the more will they approach his memory with circumspection and respect."[1]

His constructive work cannot be gainsaid. Nevertheless, there are other aspects of the story. The absolutism of Louis XIV was made possible by Richelieu; the wars of conquest carried on by the *Grand Monarque* were in furtherance of the foreign policy he began. Nor can it ever be forgotten that the stern minister, whose iron will was feared by nobles as well as peasants, gave not the slightest heed to the deplorable financial condition of the realm.

Revolts begun by peasants, made desperate by the extraordinary burdens which were placed upon them to make possible the aggrandizement of France, were put down with relentless severity; but the causes were neither investigated nor removed.

Volumes have been written to exalt and to condemn the policies of the great cardinal, who has been fittingly compared to Bismarck. Seen through the vista of several hundred years, his will probably be seen as a small but important part in welding a state together. In his age the reign of the people had not yet begun.

[1] Sainte-Beuve: *Portraits of the Seventeenth Century.*

## THE GRAND MONARCH

THE death of Louis XIII brought another child to the throne of France. Louis XIV was crowned at the age of five. His mother, daughter of the King of Spain, had renounced all hereditary claims upon her marriage. She was scarcely more capable of undertaking the administration of a great European state than had been her mother-in-law, Marie de Medici. Louis XIII had never cared for her nor had she won his confidence. Compelled to name her as regent, he attempted to curtail her power by creating a Council whose approval should be necessary for the transaction of state affairs. However, she caused the infant king immediately to hold what was termed a "bed of justice," setting aside this arrangement and leaving authority in her hands. Fortunately, Mazarin was made prime minister. He had been discovered by Richelieu, whom he admired sufficiently to leave his native land and become a citizen of France in order to work under him. The stern cardinal had trained him and so imbued him with his aspirations for the kingdom that so long as he lived Mazarin adhered to the policies laid down by his illustrious predecessor.

Once again the princes of the blood and the unruly nobles felt the time auspicious to advance their own interests at the expense of the government. Resenting the subordinate part they had been forced to take under the repressive measures of Richelieu, they now began to assert themselves. It was thought that the queen-regent would prove indulgent and they hoped soon to persuade her to dismiss Mazarin, whom they hated as a foreigner.

For several years the so-called "Wars of the Fronde" destroyed internal peace. They were thus named in derision, from a dangerous game which the street urchins played, the fronde being a sling-shot. Sometimes, during the five years intervening between 1648 and 1653, Paris was actually barricaded and battles were fought in the streets. At such times the disturbances spread to the provinces, where the perpetual grievances of oppressive taxes

supplied an ever-ready cause for rioting. As quickly as confusion prevailed and the usual protection of civil authorities was interrupted, adventurers who had served in the Thirty Years' War, still in progress, flocked thither, to terrorize entire districts. Still, during the greater portion of the time the rivalries were carried gaily into social life, women participating as freely as men.

The underlying motives which produced such a state of affairs were as many as the classes of people who participated in the struggle. The Paris *Parlement,* a department of the judiciary, had long possessed the right to register royal decrees. While the country had no constitution, this body, composed of judges of the high court, declined to register such decrees as they deemed injurious to the welfare of the land. Until a decree was registered, it did not become effective; consequently the decisions of *Parlement* had served as a wholesome check upon the sovereign. If, for example, the imposition of a new tax was regarded by *Parlement* as unjust, in refusing it a place on the register it was prevented from going into effect. As might be expected, Richelieu had reduced this body to subservience and so long as he remained at the helm the *Parlement* obeyed his instructions, no longer questioning royal decrees. Now it determined to regain its one-time prestige.

The princes and nobles, as usual, had their own interests nearest at heart. The minority of a king and a weak government appeared to them to make the time opportune to gain control of public offices and to appropriate public funds. However, to give their activities some justification, they made a pretense of working for reforms. Misled by their fine phrases, the common people hastened to swell their ranks, hoping to gain release from their oppressive burdens.

Twice the queen-regent fled with the young Louis XIV to places of safety and a third time she was prevented from flight. Mazarin left the country, returning at the first sign of peace. In time the Third Estate discerned the selfishness of the nobles and forsook them. Thereupon the trouble presently abated.

In his late history of France, Bainville has suggested some connection between these revolutionary demonstra-

tions and those of other states, especially England. He says: "A moral fever and eruption seemed to spread through many of the countries of Europe. We have already seen the King of Spain at grips with movements for independence in Catalonia and Portugal. At Naples, a fisherman, Masaniello, seized the power and his act was to stir the imagination of others. . . . But nothing could compare with the impression created by the revolution in England. The execution of Charles I, brother-in-law of Louis XIII, seemed to foretell the end of monarchies. That there was some relationship between all these events and the troubles which broke out in France cannot be doubted."[1]

The failure of the Wars of the Fronde was due to lack of common purpose. No two factions were struggling for the same end. So much suffering followed the cessation of business and usual activities that the movement died a natural death. However, it had two important consequences. First, it required a considerable time for the kingdom to recover from the anarchy into which it had been plunged; secondly, an indelible impression was left on the mind of the young king, who never forgot the humiliations suffered by his mother while the princes and nobles contended with one another.

During the eighteen years which elapsed between the death of Louis XIII and that of Mazarin, in 1661, few changes were made in the system which Richelieu had established at home nor yet in his foreign policy. Two important treaties were negotiated, each enhancing the prestige of France. By the Treaty of Westphalia, signed in 1648, she secured the bishoprics of Metz, Toul and Verdun and ascendancy in Alsace, although lack of clarity as to this oft-disputed district paved the way for future trouble. By the Peace of the Pyrenees, in 1658, the Rhenish League came under the protection of France. This treaty provided for the marriage of Louis XIV with the Spanish Infanta, Maria-Thèrésa, who was to forego all claim to Spanish possessions upon the payment of large dowry. No attempt being made to discharge it, the French king found an excuse for laying claim to territories in the Low Countries some time later.

To the surprise of all, after the death of Mazarin, Louis XIV announced that henceforth he himself would assume the rôle of first minister, and forbade his councillors to negotiate affairs of state without his sanction. Throughout his long reign—he died in 1715—he adhered to this resolution. He realized that the French were weary of ministerial rule. Consequently he gathered into his own hand the various threads of government and kept a close watch over them all. This policy received the acclaim of his subjects, who lavished fulsome praise upon him. The absolutism of a monarch was to prove ultimately as wearisome to them as had been that of ministers; but years passed ere this truth was realized.

Internal peace endured throughout Louis XIV's reign. In the later years he made an irremediable error. Resenting the presence of an element in the population which did not conform to the uniformity he craved, he renewed the persecution of the Huguenots and revoked the Edict of Nantes. It has been variously estimated that from two to five hundred thousand of the most substantial artisans of the realm were driven into exile by this folly, and not only did the industrial interests suffer by their emigration but, enlisting under the armies of other lands, these exiles proved formidable enemies of the king in the long wars waged by him.

His foreign policy was largely a continuation of that begun by Richelieu with the object of rounding out the borders of France on the north and east. Through his wife's hereditary rights he laid claim to portions of Spanish dominion, which led to another period of warfare.

The situation was that Carlos II of Spain had no direct heirs. As a result it was surmised that the crown would pass to one of the descendants of his sisters. One sister had married the King of France, the other the Emperor of Austria. Several partition treaties were prepared by interested potentates of Europe before the demise of the feeble ruler of Madrid. At length it was found that the grandson of Louis XIV, the Duke of Anjou, known later as Philip V, had been named by the dying king as his successor. Consternation spread over Europe. It was feared,

should the kingdoms of France and Spain become united under one king, that the peace of Europe would again be jeopardized as in the time of Charles V. Before the struggle ended, the Archduke Charles, whose candidacy for the throne of Spain the allies fought, inherited the Austrian crown. As Europe dreaded the union of Austria and Spain quite as much as that of France and Spain, the tedious strife came to an end by the Treaty of Utrecht, provision being made that the two crowns should never be united under one sovereign.

Probably it is safe to say that no western monarch ever enjoyed so splendid a reign as Louis XIV. He counted reverence of majesty to be a distinct asset to a king and surrounded himself with every evidence of pomp. Court ceremony grew to resemble that of Oriental despots. Courtiers waited on his every word and vied with one another to serve him in the slightest capacity. Emperor worship, introduced into the western world by Diocletian, was almost born again, amid the gorgeous spectacle of which the "Grand Monarque" was the center. The heavy cost of wars for aggrandizement and for the luxury of the palace of Versailles was to bring the whirlwind; but, during the life of the greatest of the Bourbons, peace dwelt within his borders and, until his declining years, his greatness was continually extolled.

[1] Bainville: *History of France,* 170.

## IN THE DAYS OF THE "SUN KING"

IT has been estimated that the population of France, in the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV, was about 19,000,000. Eight hundred thousand of this number belonged to the privileged orders—the clergy and *noblesse*. Perhaps one and one-half million were burghers, or bourgeois: merchants, petty officers and those of professional calling. The remainder, over three-fourths of the total population, were artisans and peasants, humble folk who toiled with their hands.

At the summit of French society stood the court, with the Grand Monarch its supreme luminary—hence the appellation "Sun King," which fell so agreeably on his ears. From infancy he had been taught that he was God's representative on earth and that implicit obedience was due him from every subject, whose life was in his hands. Throughout his days he was surrounded by courtiers who soothed his vanity by flattery and he became the logical result of such training and environment. His regal bearing gave him distinction under all circumstances.

The ceremony which attended him would have been insupportable to that sturdy prince of Navarre—Henry IV. It palled upon Louis XIV before the end. He became a slave to the etiquette which had gratified his pride in earlier years. "Each of the king's ordinary acts of daily life, arising, dining, taking a walk, hunting, having supper, going to bed, became a public ceremony with minutely regulated details—all known as 'royal etiquette.'

"The 'Sun King' rose at eight. The courtiers were introduced into the bedchamber by groups, known as the *entrées*. For the *lever* there were six entrées, and after the last of these, some hundred persons at length found themselves in the royal presence. . . . The 'etiquette' indicated what persons should present each separate garment: for example, the 'day shirt' wrapped in an envelope of white silk had to be presented by a son of the king, a prince of the blood, or, failing them, by the grand chamberlain. The

right glove had to be presented by the first valet of the chamber; the left glove by the first valet of the wardrobe."

At meal time the procedure was quite as rigid. "Each plate was borne in by a gentleman, preceded by an usher and by a *maitre d'hotel* and escorted by three life guardsmen, musket on shoulder. . . . If he wished to drink, it required three gentlemen to provide him with a glass of water or wine."[1]

Although it pleased the king to have this daily draught of adulation poured out before him at the rising and setting of the sun—the ceremony of retirement was just as formal—the king was possessed of much sound sense. It is probable that he regarded adulation as more disciplinary for the courtier than necessary to a sovereign. He deemed it appropriate that the greatest ruler of the greatest European state should be attended with pomp and ceremony.

Around the king swarmed an endless number of persons, essential to his happiness. Until Marie-Thèrése died, the Queen of France was an ever-present, if not an essential, factor. While friendly to her, the "Sun King" publicly flaunted his favorites in her presence. For many years Madame de Montespan was his mistress. He legalized the children she bore him and made them "princes of the blood." In course of time, Maintenon, the demure governess of these children, supplanted their mother in the affections of Louis XIV. After the death of the queen, he wedded Madame de Maintenon by a secret marriage, but she was never given official recognition.

The Dauphin died in middle life; he was little more than a shadow, hastening at all times to endorse the sentiments of his royal father. His son, the Duke of Burgundy, was long regarded as the probable future sovereign, but he was cut off prematurely and the crown passed on to Louis' great-grandson.

After the royal family, there were numerous courtiers who lived only to scintillate in the presence of their king. Their fulsome flattery must have wearied the ears of the ruler with the weight of years. Such was the court.

The First Estate, the clergy, controlled much of the land

in France. Their property was worth billions of livres. They held assemblies every five years, on which occasions they voted the "free-will offering," the only money paid by them toward the support of the government. They fell into two classes: Upper and Lower clergy. The most remunerative posts were reserved to be royally bestowed upon powerful families. Bishoprics and other desirable places were filled by the king's favorites. In contrast to the wealth of the Upper clergy, the Lower clergy lived often in actual want. It fell upon them to minister to the masses.

The nobles were likewise divided by their resources into the more influential, who cared only to live at the capital, while reduced families dwelt away in the provinces, in many cases, bemoaning the fate which kept them far from the current of affairs.

The bourgeoise had prospered in recent years. They were able to buy minor offices for themselves and, so long as they paid the required fee, could hold these in their families and bequeath them, like other property, to their sons. To be sure, the old nobility regarded them with contempt, but, more and more, money was asserting itself and becoming a power. Sons of proud nobles frequently recouped their fortunes by marrying the daughters of wealthy merchants. Not infrequently did the king ennoble men who made munificent gifts to him.

When it came to the peasantry, the contrast was vivid, and he who wishes to enjoy the magnificent picture of the court of Louis XIV to the full would do well to make no inquiry as to the sources of revenue which made possible such dazzling splendor.

"Tillers of the soil famished while 300 cooks baked, broiled, stewed, and fricasseed to feast the 4,000 parasites, courtezans and place hunters who infested the royal palace."[2]

The peasants were desperately poor and wretched. Lady Montague, who visited France in 1718, wrote to a correspondent: "I think nothing so terrible as objects of misery; and all the country villages of France show nothing else. When the post horses are changed, the whole town comes out to beg; with such miserable, starved faces and

thin, tattered clothes they need no eloquence to convince one of the wretchedness of their condition."

Local insurrections were frequent and the severest penalties were visited upon the offenders but no investigation made as to why they were incited to such action; nor were testimonies lacking as to the actual state of rural labor. Many wrote of seeing the peasants devouring grass, nettles and roots to still the pangs of hunger. In 1663 the governor of Dauphine reported that the poor were grinding nut-shell with acorns, black corn and hay to make bread. Those who were goaded into rebellion by the insolence of the tax gatherer were hanged or sent to the galleys. Appalled by hangings and torture, the more timid would be hushed into order for the time being.

Louis XIV was fortunate in having the aid of Colbert, who had the thankless task of trying to bring some semblance of order out of the national finances. Due to his tireless efforts, the fiscal conditions improved. He worked ceaselessly to encourage industries, introducing the manufacture of fine cloth, of lace, porcelain and other commodities which had not been produced in the country previously. A high standard of workmanship was set up by Colbert and it was during his time that the excellence of French goods was established abroad, henceforth to be steadily maintained. Manufacturers who disobeyed his strict rules found their materials publicly burned.

Colbert held to the mistaken doctrine that a country should conserve its own gold and attract as much as possible of the precious metal possessed by its neighbors. This theory has been long since disproved.

Had the able minister of finance been able to curtail the expenditures of his imperious ruler, things might have gone better with France; but Louis could not be curbed in his building projects nor in carrying on unnecessary wars. To provide a court worthy of his magnificence, he ordered the construction of a marvelous royal city, with its great palace, courts, parks, gardens and adjoining buildings at Versailles, about twelve miles from Paris, where, years before, Louis XIII had built an unpretentious hunting chateau. Wars for the time subsiding, the king ordered thirty thousand of the

soldiers to begin the construction of channels to conduct water thither, to make possible his proposed gardens and marvelous fountains. Just how much it cost to create the wonders of Versailles can never be known, for the king destroyed all accounts bearing upon the subject; but it has been variously estimated to have required from fifty to one hundred million livres. Small wonder was it that at the death of Louis the national debt loomed large, the revenues being mortgaged for several years to come and money sadly depreciated in value.

In 1681 Louis XIV took up his residence in his new palace, where he died in 1715, at the age of seventy-seven, having reigned seventy-two years. A book might be written to relate the course of changing events which Versailles, with its great halls, conventional gardens, and curiously shaped trees, has witnessed. In 1871 the Germans made this their headquarters when they besieged Paris. A few years ago the representatives of the great nations met here to frame the settlement of the great World War.

It is well to take leave of Louis XIV in the midst of his marble court, his statuary, fountains, parks and pleasances that he loved so well. His country was destined to pass through fire and water ere the sins of the old régime were expiated. Its gay life, with its glamour and glitter, is typified by the royal palace which was called "the glory of France."

"Versailles is a medley of verdure, a hierarchy of bronze and a forest of marble. This is an expression of anomalies but it is strictly applicable to Versailles. Its water jets and cascades, its monsters, its Tritons and Valhalla of marble statues set off the artificial background in a manner only to be compared to a stage setting—a magnificent stage setting, but still palpably unreal. . . . If there was ever a Castle of Indolence and Profligacy it was Versailles, though indeed it is regarded as the monarchy's brilliant zenith. The picture is an unforgettable one to any who have read its history or seen its stones."[3]

In the Galerie, more commonly called the *Salon des Glaces*, Louis XIV, the "Sun King," received the adulation of his courtiers. It is a hall two hundred and fifty feet in

length, forty feet wide and forty-three feet in height. On one side are seventeen great arched windows and opposite them the same number of mirrors. Sixty Corinthian columns of red marble fill the intervening wall spaces. The ceiling is adorned with allegorical paintings of outstanding events in the life of the great king.

Nothing has ever been more humiliating to the French people than the thought that this monument of their greatness once sheltered the officers of their hereditary foes.

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[1] Davis: *History of France,* 154.
[2] Watson: *Story of France,* I, 571.
[3] Miltoun: *Royal Palaces of France,* 244, 247.

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY FRANCE

"After us the deluge."

WHEN word reached the provinces that the "Sun King" was dead, shouts of joy resounded from one peasant village to another. It was vainly imagined that the advent of a new ruler meant release from the insupportable burdens of taxation. Instead, matters were to grow continually worse for more than half a century longer.

An epidemic of smallpox had swept away the Duke of Burgundy, long regarded as heir to the throne, together with his wife and elder son. An infant five years of age was left to inherit the throne. This caused anxiety to Louis XIV, and, as he lay dying, he had tried to form a regency which would best meet the situation. He named the Duke of Maine, an illegitimate son, whose birth he had legalized, as regent. This position naturally belonged to the Duke of Orleans, who successfully invoked the aid of *Parlement* to have the will set aside and his own regency established. He was nominally at the head of government until his death in 1723, but Cardinal Dubois served for some time as general administrator. In 1723 the Duke of Bourbon succeeded Orleans, and three years later Fleury, formerly tutor to the young sovereign, took his place, which he held until 1743.

The truth was that even when he became legally of age, the new king, crowned as Louis XV, had no desire to trouble himself with the business of his realm. As a child he had been deprived of parents and given into the care of strangers. Because he was not strong, he was pampered and spoiled, scarcely educated in other than the social graces. Inheriting his great-grandfather's ideas as to the divinity of kings and their limitless rights, he had not inherited his illustrious predecessor's willingness to discharge the duties of a monarch. As a result, the story of his reign is repellant in the extreme. Guizot states the situation adequately in a sentence: "Starting from the reign of Louis XV, the nation has no longer a head, history no longer a centre; at the

same time with a master of the higher order, great servants also fail the French monarchy; it all at once collapses, betraying thus the exhaustion of Louis XIV's latter years; decadence is no longer veiled by the remnants of the splendor which was still reflected from the great king and his great reign; the glory of olden France descends slowly to its grave.'"[1]

The finances of a country must ever give indication of its actual solidarity. When Louis XV came to the throne, France had a deficit of three billion five hundred million livres. The people had long been ground down by oppressive taxes; yet another, called the "tax of the joyous accession," was added on the occasion of the coronation.

When money matters were in such straits, ready ear was given to a Scotchman by the name of Law, who advanced a project for quickening economic activities by putting plenty of money into circulation. This would seem to be difficult for a state near bankruptcy, but his contention was that it was not necessary to secure paper notes by specie—the country's credit was sufficient security. He was allowed to start a bank in 1716, and two years later this became the national bank of France. Not more than 25 per cent of the notes issued were secured by gold and silver. In connection with his bank he organized a company for the exploitation of the vast region in America known as *Louisiana,* including the basin of the Mississippi and reaching indefinitely to the northwest. As a matter of fact, many of our present states have since been carved from this territory, which was purchased from France by our government during the administration of Jefferson, when Napoleon was in need of funds. Law believed this district, extending from New Orleans to Chicago and away to the Pacific Ocean, presented untold possibilities. He was not destined to discover them, however, for, after experiencing a brief period of prosperity wherein trade showed the exhilarating effect of money thrown rapidly into circulation, there came the time of depression. Some of the nobles began to turn their Mississippi stock into coin and others imitated their prudent example. A run on the bank followed, and as the reserve was far short of the paper money which had been

issued, the result was inevitable. The Mississippi company met a fate similar to that of the South Sea Company and another lesson had been learned in high finance.

A marriage between the French king and the Spanish Infanta, daughter of Philip V, was proposed and the little princess came to Paris to be educated; greatly to the chagrin and anger of the Spanish, she was afterwards sent home, while Louis XV presently married Marie Leczinska, daughter of Stanislaus, the dethroned king of Poland. She bore him several daughters and two sons, to whom he was quite devoted. However, he early came under the influence of courtezans who frequently dictated the policy of the French government, with no higher motives than the satisfaction of their own whims, jealousies and aversions.

It were idle to attempt to enumerate the various mistresses who in turn enjoyed the favor of Louis XV. Suffice it to say that not until 1745 did any of them attempt to meddle in politics. Jeanne Poisson, an attractive young woman, the wife of a sub-contractor of revenue, won the king's favor and was made Marquise de Pompadour. For nineteen years she held his heart and cost France thirty-six million livres. Castles were built for her and ministers made and unmade at her bidding. Then Madame du Barry won first place and in three years increased by eighteen million livres the sum that had to be raised by the peasantry. Small wonder was it that the king's mistresses were hissed in the street and given many signs of popular resentment.

It is doubtful whether any other sovereign has ever enjoyed a reign of nearly sixty years, yet given so little attention to the welfare of his people as did Louis XV. His attitude could not be better explained than in the words of Watson: "He found the monarchy waiting for his ownership; he took his seat on the throne, as a traveler enters the vessel upon which he must travel to reach a given destination. He did not build the ship, had nothing to do with equipping it, takes no particular interest in it. He simply finds it there, enters it, enjoys what pleasures it offers, concerns himself little about its management, takes everything as a matter of course, and cares absolutely nothing

about the fate of the ship, or of the companions of his voyage, after he shall have left it. His only care is that it shall sail smoothly while he is aboard."[2]

Whatever of importance went on during his reign was conceived and executed by others. As a matter of fact, several wars were fought in Europe during his reign, notably the War of Austrian Succession, with the subsequent dismemberment of Poland. The Order of Jesuits was banished from France and later dissolved by the Pope. In this particular occurrence Louis XV took some interest, since his favorite of the hour disliked Jesuits. But as for Poland and its fate, it is only recorded that Madame du Barry looked up with momentary interest when the subject was mentioned to inquire: "Where *is* Poland?"

The Marquis of Argenson deprecated the predicament of his well-loved country in the ominous words: "The Court is the tomb of the Nation."

The king sought only his own pleasure, expending two million livres in a year on fireworks, which diverted him in his perpetual boredom. When reminded of the dangers which threatened the state, his answer was: "Things as they are will last as long as I shall," and Madame du Barry could add: "After us the deluge."

The historical student may wish to trace the details of the decades that elapsed ere the useless king released his hold on a throne that he merely occupied—never honored. In one year only—1738—thanks to the management of Fleury, the income of the state equalled its expenses. Such an unusual state of affairs was not to be repeated until the time of Napoleon. Some years the deficit was larger than others; sometimes the bounty of Nature gave enough for even the peasants to eat. However, viewing the reign as a whole, it presents the darkly contrasting picture of courtly pleasures and peasant woes; of a state well nigh abandoned to its fate, while the king and his associates revelled.

"Like a bevy of bacchanals, maddened with wine and garlanded with flowers, the old French *noblesse* reeled to its doom, riotously gay to the last. It was as though a carnival, rollicking through sunny avenues, had met the Pale Horse and its rider at the turn of the street, and the

shouts of revelry had changed to shrieks of fear and pain —as light, life and joy were stricken down by swift, appalling Death."[3]

[1] Guizot, *History of France,* V, 5.
[2] Watson: *Story of France,* I, 641.
[3] Ibid., 695.

## SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LITERATURE

THE seventeenth century bears the relationship to French literature that the sixteenth holds to the literature of England. It is remarkable for its writers of originality and genius.

In the preceding century the Renaissance had stimulated an interest in classical writings and had encouraged men to emulate the ideals and methods of antiquity. A Classical period was thus inaugurated to last until the dawn of Romanticism, in the first years of the nineteenth century. However, it is possible to trace many changes in the course of its development.

Breaking with the suppression of the individual, which characterized the Middle Ages, the Renaissance liberated the individual and exalted the ego. Before the end of the sixteenth century, liberty had thus become license in many cases and French literature had fallen into a state of anarchy. It was the work of literary critics during the great Classical Age to restore system and order, to set up reason as the sure criterion and to discourage whatever failed to conform to its standards.

Ronsard and his associates had endeavored to impose classical rules upon poetry at an earlier time, but the effort of the *Pleiade* had not been wholly successful. François de Malherbe (1555-1628) enthroned reason, before whose shrine all poets were admonished to worship. Himself a poet of meagre parts, he was able, nevertheless, to influence young poets to follow his example in making public events the subject of their odes and in replacing the personal element, which had been so marked, by abstractions.

What Malherbe did for poetry during the first part of the century, Jean-Louis de Balzac (1594-1654) did for prose. Although he made less apparent efforts to reform writing, his *Lettres* were such models in prose that they served a like purpose.

The critic *par excellence* of the century, beyond doubt, was Boileau, who spent well nigh half a lifetime hewing

away at the objectionable undergrowth of literature with his axe of satire. At his death the tenets of Classicism were acknowledged on every hand.

The first half of the century paved the way for the remarkable achievements of *le grand siècle*—the Age of Louis XIV. The mere enumeration of its distinguished names is enough to justify the appellation. When since has any country produced three such playwrights as Corneille, Racine and Molière in a generation? Corneille is remembered as the father of French tragedy; Pascal is often called the father of French prose. Descartes attempted to do for intellectual thought what critics had done for letters—to reduce it to system and order.

Not alone for its luminaries of first magnitude is the *Great Age* celebrated, but for its lesser and more intimate writers as well. The charm of the letters penned by Madame de Sévigné so distinguishes them from all others that she is often mentioned as the most accomplished writer of modern times. The epistles which she dispatched to her daughter in the provinces reflect the more refined society of the period. Would we see its follies and foibles portrayed more acutely, although with equal magnanimity, the droll fables of La Fontaine are at hand. For another mood there is *Telemaque,* that unique volume, composed in idle hours by one of the highest-minded men who ever taught a prince in any land, in any age—Fénelon, who hoped in this adroit way to impress wholesome truths upon the mind of his young charge, the Duke of Burgundy, never dreaming that death would remove the royal heir before opportunity should come to give his Utopian plans application.

It would be impossible to consider the literature of the century without taking into account its most popular form of expression: the drama. Classical French drama includes three great names: Corneille, Racine and the inimitable Molière, more truly the product of his times than any other seventeenth century writer. Of Corneille it has been said that he "carried to a degree of perfection hitherto unknown all the dramatic forms, tragedy, comedy, tragi-comedy, melodrama and spectacular piece." His elevation of comedy

from the coarseness and licentiousness that had prevailed before made ready the way for the perfection of Racine.

We are obliged to confine our attention to only the most celebrated of that galaxy that made splendid the "Great Age." There are certain names that even the general reader, limited to the medium of his own tongue, cannot afford to ignore: Descartes, Pascal, La Fontaine, Fénelon, Madame de Sévigné.

An extended examination of the period would of necessity include the poetry of Chapelain, Voiture and Racan; the oratory of Bossuet; the criticisms of Boileau; the finished letters of Balzac; the *Maxims* of the embittered La Rochefoucauld, and many another production well worth perusal, which must be omitted in so cursory a review as this.

## DESCARTES

"Cogito, ergo sum."

ONE of the greatest thinkers of this brilliant literary age did not grace the Court of Louis XIII, nor yet that of the regency which followed. The very character of his writings, insistent as they were upon independent thought, compelled him to seek the freer atmosphere of Holland during his creative period. When his fame had reached throughout Europe and his genius was readily conceded, Richelieu tried to draw him back to Paris, but died ere the plan was carried out.

René Descartes was born in 1596, in Touraine, not far from Poitiers. His family belonged to the lesser nobility and his unusual name is said to be a contraction of what was once Des Quartes. His followers adopted its Latin rendering, *Cartesius,* and, in spite of the philosopher's preference for the French form, they became known as *Cartesians.*

René being physically frail, his father made a careful investigation of the schools in order to place the boy where he might gain bodily strength whilst he acquired knowledge. He decided upon La Flèche, a Jesuit school, established by Henry IV, who had wished to convince the Jesuits, only lately permitted to return to France, that he bore them no ill will. Le Flèche proved in many ways to be well suited to the lad. Père Charles, the presiding spirit, soon recognized his unusual ability and gave him opportunity for solitude and meditation, which he craved even in childhood.

Descartes was a born mathematician and delighted in the absolute results to be obtained in the various branches of mathematics. For a time geometry would be his favorite study; then algebra would for awhile supplant it. He made important contributions to the science in later life and always maintained a keen interest in it. Much attention was given to mathematics in Europe at this time. Italian scholars adopted certain conveniences, such as the use of the plus and minus signs in arithmetic and of the first let-

ters of the alphabet to represent known quantities in algebra. In view of the almost uncanny mathematical genius exhibited by Pascal, a countryman and contemporary of Descartes, it is reasonable to believe that minds adapted to this abstract study were influenced by the spirit of the times, even though unacquainted with others pursuing the same subject. It was already recognized that knowledge of advanced mathematics would be necessary for an understanding of astronomy, the earth's movements and other matters in which men were then absorbed. In view of the study of refraction of light, of optics and the improvement of the telescope, it is apparent that no science served more practical ends in the seventeenth century than that of numbers.

The eight years spent under the tutelage of the Jesuit fathers left their ineffaceable imprint upon the young student. His reluctance to break with orthodox teaching calls to mind a similar attitude on the part of Erasmus; both, as a result, were led into marked inconsistencies.

Descartes' *Discourse on Method* is one of the most remarkable autobiographies in existence. From it we learn that even as a school-boy he had been dissatisfied with the instruction gained from books. Having completed the course of study which the school provided, instead of finding himself learned, as he had expected, he says: "I completely changed my opinion. For I found myself involved in so many doubts and errors that I was convinced I had advanced no farther, in all my attempts at learning, than the discovery at every turn of my own ignorance. . . . For these reasons, as soon as my age permitted me to pass from under the control of my instructors, I entirely abandoned the study of letters, and resolved no longer to seek any other science than the knowledge of myself, or of the great book of the world."

A short sojourn in Paris convinced him of the shallowness of life as followed by his acquaintances and he enlisted as a volunteer in an army commanded by the Prince of Orange, Holland being then an ally of France. For three years he lived the life of a soldier. Since he did not accept payment, he was allowed to pursue a fairly free existence,

and his comprehension of engineering, of constructing defenses and of mathematics in general everywhere won him the attention of those in authority. The coarse, brutal life of the common soldier was repulsive to him, but he availed himself of the opportunity afforded to study his fellow man. Desiring, as he explains in the *Method,* to distinguish between the true and the false, he felt that in conversation with men in reference to matters which personally concerned them he might learn to do this better than in the artificial surroundings of schools.

Spectacles always attracted him and we read of his interest in the elaborate ceremonies attendant upon the coronation of an emperor; of his presence at a Jubilee in Rome and elsewhere when events of unusual significance brought together large numbers of people. Intent on the study of man, it was often in cities that Descartes sought solitude. While he was impatient of interruption and resented the waste of time that even slight social duties entailed, he wrote to friends in France that the busy hum of traffic in Amsterdam soothed him as the murmuring of a river.

Having tried in vain to lose himself in Paris, only to have misguided but well intentioned friends break in upon his meditations, Descartes slipped away to Holland, where he spent the greater portion of his mature years. It seems as though Paris of the celebrated *salons,* the embryo academy and prevailing literary spirit might have proved inspirational. As a late biographer observes: "Everyone for the time being was literary in a fashionable sort of way, and the great spirits of the times, the greatest of whom were just rising into manhood, were the heroes whom all united in worshipping. Now, to some men all this might have had an inspiring effect; more especially, perhaps, might it have been so with the poet and the playwright; but the study of philosophy demands surroundings of a different sort, and it, of all subjects, requires that time and quiet shall be at the command of the thinker."[1]

Descartes felt that he must devote himself exclusively to determining for his own satisfaction what knowledge is, what is knowable and what unknowable. His *Rules* had

appeared as early as 1629. In introducing them he had stated the true end of study to be to enable one to "form a good judgment"; however, he noted that only "few direct their minds to the development of their intelligence"—as apt a comment today as when written in the seventeenth century.

He is best known today by his admirable *Discourse on Method.* Whereas some of his writings were couched in Latin, this was done in simple French, so that the humblest of his countrymen might read it. Yet so revolutionary was it regarded that not until long afterwards did it and other of his treatises find a place in the schools.

In 1641 the *Meditation* were published and three years later, the *Principles.* Both of these writings require close study and concentration of thought for their comprehension. Moreover, the particular theories advocated by Descartes have yielded in some instances to others. His great contribution to human thought was his *Discourse in Method,* which may be read with enjoyment and profit today by the generality of people, since it is unmarred by technicality. "Descartes' philosophy made reason the sole and only means for discovering truth, and proclaimed the fact that the use of reason alone would bring about the knowledge of every truth."[2]

It is difficult for us now to realize how alarming and revolutionary the ideas expressed in this little treatise of some fifty pages seemed in the middle of the seventeenth century. Descartes claimed that truth could be apprehended only through doubt. The doubter ultimately would reach bed rock; he might doubt the very existence of hands and feet, but he would not be able to doubt that he doubted. "I think; therefore I exist." This statement became the foundation stone for the erection of his philosophy. He claimed that truth might be apprehended only when error had been swept away. Nothing was to be accepted on tradition; "Do not accept as truth what is not clearly known as such." Logic and its syllogisms, which had played such a part in mediæval philosophy, he aptly dismissed as "of avail rather in the communication of what we already know . . . than in the investigation of the unknown."

As might be expected, not only did the Catholics protest against individual right to doubt and to seek for truth, but Calvinists, as well. Followers of Descartes in Utrecht who attempted to communicate the teachings of the master in the universities met with quick opposition. Wishing at all times to hold with the Catholic church, the philosopher sent his writings, upon publication, to his erstwhile teachers at La Flèche, among whom arose division of opinion as to the soundness or danger of his doctrines.

Descartes never married although he had a little daughter of whom he was very fond. Her death in early childhood was a severe blow to him.

One of the pleasant experiences of his life was a long, Platonic friendship with Princess Elizabeth, granddaughter of James I of England. Her mother had wed the Elector of the Palatinate, whose unsteady fortunes led to the exile of his family. The Princess Elizabeth was a student and the philosopher's kindly interest in her and her enthusiasm for his work opened the way for a correspondence between them that lasted for years. It is from surviving letters that we learn of Descartes' private life, which was often lonely, in spite of strong friendships. Beyond a doubt, he was often a rather difficult friend, although loyal when once his favor had been won.

The eccentric Queen Christiana of Sweden heard much of Descartes from an acquaintance of his who happened for awhile to be in residence at her court. The queen decided that nothing would please her more than to have the distinguished Frenchman come to Sweden to instruct her in his system of philosophy. Throughout life he had never been sturdy and had always bestowed considerable attention on his health. The prospect of a rigorous winter in the far north of Europe did not allure him and he tried to escape from the ordeal without giving offense. Somewhat gratified by the distinction shown him as well as puzzled to find a way out, he finally consented to undertake the mission which hastened his death. With her usual thoughtlessness, Queen Christiana requested the philosopher to repair to her each morning at five o'clock, when her mind was fresh. As a result of the early rising in a cold

Chateau Fontainebleau. France

climate, he soon became ill and died in February, 1650, ere his serious condition was realized.

The scientific student finds pleasure in the writings of Descartes on the subject of optics, geometry, physiology and mechanics. To the general reader these would be profitless. Subsequent discovery has lessened the value of much that he wrote in these departments. On the other hand, modern thinkers must ever acknowledge their debt to him for his fearless discarding of the outworn traditions, for his independent methods and, particularly, for his clarity of expression.

His predilection for mathematics suggests a key to his philosophy, for it would seem that from school days, when he spent the hours upon first awakening in early morning pondering problems in algebra or geometrical propositions, he conceived that some means equally capable of proof might be found for solving the problem of the universe. By comprehending the individual, he believed, it would be possible to understand the mass. By brushing aside error and untruth, the way would be made ready for constructive thought. What was already known seemed to him nothing in comparison with the vast realms yet unexplored by human mind.

Descartes was a pioneer. The laws of psychology, only recently comprehended, were then unguessed. Harvey had precipitated the usual outcry from the orthodox by publishing his scientific treatise upon the circulation of the blood, disproving most that had previously been assumed regarding the heart. Galileo had been imprisoned and compelled publicly to recant his theory as to the earth's movements. On several occasions Descartes believed himself to be endangered because of his philosophical views.

That his opinions on anatomy, meteors and light have been superseded counts for little. His advocacy of freedom of thought and personal interpretation helped to lessen the hold of tradition and to establish the liberty which we now enjoy.

[1] Haldane: *Life of Descartes*, 111.
[2] Boulenger: *The Seventeenth Century*, 128.

# From the DISCOURSE ON METHOD

By Rene Descartes

## Part I

Good sense is, of all things among men, the most equally distributed; for every one thinks himself so abundantly provided with it, that those even who are the most difficult to satisfy in everything else, do not usually desire a larger measure of this quality than they already possess. And in this it is not likely that all are mistaken: the conviction is rather to be held as testifying that the power of judging aright and of distinguishing Truth from Error, which is properly what is called Good Sense or Reason, is by nature equal in all men; and that the diversity of our opinions, consequently, does not arise from some being endowed with a larger share of Reason than others, but solely from this, that we conduct our thoughts along different ways, and do not fix our attention on the same objects. For to be possessed of a vigorous mind is not enough; the prime requisite is rightly to apply it. The greatest minds, as they are capable of the highest excellencies, are open likewise to the greatest aberrations; and those who travel very slowly may yet make far greater progress, provided they keep always to the straight road, than those who, while they run, forsake it.

For myself, I have never fancied my mind to be in any respect more perfect than those of the generality; on the contrary, I have often wished that I were equal to some others in promptitude of thought, or in clearness and distinctness of imagination, or in fullness and readiness of memory. And besides these, I know of no other qualities that contribute to the perfection of the mind; for as to the Reason or Sense, inasmuch as it is that alone which constitutes us men, and distinguishes us from the brutes, I am disposed to believe that it is to be found complete in each individual; and on this point to adopt the common opinion of philosophers, who say that the difference of greater and less holds only among the *accidents*, and not

among the *forms* or *natures* of individuals of the same *species.*

I will not hesitate, however, to avow my belief that it has been my singular good fortune to have very early in life fallen in with certain tracks which have conducted me to considerations and maxims, of which I have formed a Method that gives me the means, as I think, of gradually augmenting my knowledge, and of raising it by little and little to the highest point which the mediocrity of my talents and the brief duration of my life will permit me to reach. For I have already reaped from it such fruits that, although I have been accustomed to think lowly enough of myself, and although when I look with the eye of a philosopher at the varied courses and pursuits of mankind at large, I find scarcely one which does not appear vain and useless, I nevertheless derive the highest satisfaction from the progress I conceive myself to have already made in the search after truth, and cannot help entertaining such expectations of the future as to believe that if, among the occupations of men as men, there is any one really excellent and important, it is that which I have chosen.

After all, it is possible I may be mistaken; and it is but a little copper and glass, perhaps, that I take for gold and diamonds. I know how very liable we are to delusion in what relates to ourselves, and also how much the judgments of our friends are to be suspected when given in our favour. But I shall endeavour in this discourse to describe the paths I have followed, and delineate my life as in a picture, in order that each one may be able to judge of them for himself, and that in the general opinion entertained of them, as gathered from current report, I myself may have a new help towards instruction to be added to those I have been in the habit of employing.

My present design, then, is not to teach the Method which each ought to follow for the right conduct of his Reason, but solely to describe the way in which I have endeavoured to conduct my own. They who set themselves to give precepts must of course regard themselves as possessed of greater skill than those to whom they prescribe; and if they err in the slightest particular, they subject

themselves to censure. But as this tract is put forth merely as a history, or, if you will, as a tale, in which, amid some examples worthy of imitation, there will be found, perhaps, as many more which it were advisable not to follow, I hope it will prove useful to some without being hurtful to any, and that my openness will find some favor with all.

From my childhood, I have been familiar with letters; and as I was given to believe that by their help a clear and certain knowledge of all that is useful in life might be acquired, I was ardently desirous of instruction. But as soon as I had finished the entire course of study, at the close of which it is customary to be admitted into the order of the learned, I completely changed my opinion. For I found myself involved in so many doubts and errors, that I was convinced I had advanced no farther in all my attempts at learning, than the discovery at every turn of my own ignorance. And yet I was studying in one of the most celebrated schools in Europe, in which I thought there must be learned men, if such anywhere to be found. I had been taught all that others learned there; and not contented with the sciences actually taught us, I had, in addition, read all the books that had fallen into my hands, treating of such branches as are esteemed the most curious and rare. I knew the judgment which others had formed of me; and I did not find that I was considered inferior to my fellows, although there were among them some who were already marked out to fill the places of our instructors. And, in fine, our age appears to me as flourishing, and as fertile in powerful minds as any preceding one. I was thus led to take the liberty of judging of all other men by myself, and of concluding that there was no science in existence that was of such a nature as I had previously been given to believe.

I still continued, however, to hold in esteem the studies of the schools. I was aware that the languages taught in them are necessary to the understanding of the writings of the ancients; that the grace of fable stirs the mind; that the memorable deeds of history elevate it; and, if read with discretion, aid in forming the judgment; that

the perusal of all excellent books is, as it were, to interview with the noblest men of past ages, who have written them, and even a studied interview, in which are discovered to us only their choicest thoughts; that eloquence has incomparable force and beauty; that poesy has its ravishing graces and delights; that in the mathematics there are many refined discoveries eminently suited to gratify the inquisitive, as well as further all the arts and lessen the labour of man; that numerous highly useful precepts and exhortations to virtue are contained in treatises on morals; that theology points out the path to heaven; that philosophy affords the means of discoursing with an appearance of truth on all matters, and commands the admiration of the more simple; that jurisprudence, medicine, and the other sciences, secure for their cultivators honours and riches; and in fine, that it is useful to bestow some attention upon all, even upon those abounding the most in superstition and error, that we may be in a position to determine their real value, and guard against being deceived.

But I believed that I had already given sufficient time to languages, and likewise to the reading of the writings of the ancients, to their histories and fables. For to hold converse with those of other ages and to travel, are almost the same thing. It is useful to know something of the manners of different nations, that we may be enabled to form a more correct judgment regarding our own, and be prevented from thinking that everything contrary to our customs is ridiculous and irrational—a conclusion usually come to by those whose experience has been limited to their own country. On the other hand, when too much time is occupied in traveling, we become strangers to our native country; and the over curious in the customs of the past are generally ignorant of those of the present. Besides, fictitious narratives lead us to imagine the possibility of many events that are impossible; and even the most faithful histories, if they do not wholly misrepresent matters, or exaggerate their importance to render the account of them more worthy of perusal, omit, at least, almost always the meanest and least striking of the attendant circumstances; hence it happens that the remainder does not

represent the truth, and that such as regulate their conduct by examples drawn from this source, are apt to fall into the extravagances of the knight-errants of romance, and to entertain projects that exceed their powers.

I esteemed eloquence highly, and was in raptures with poesy; but I thought that both were gifts of nature rather than fruits of study. Those in whom the faculty of reason is predominant, and who most skilfully dispose their thoughts with a view to render them clear and intelligible, are always the best able to persuade others of the truth of what they lay down, though they should speak only in the language of Lower Brittany, and be wholly ignorant of the rules of rhetoric; and those whose minds are stored with the most agreeable fancies, and who can give expression to them with the greatest embellishment and harmony, are still the best poets, though unacquainted with the art of poetry.

I was especially delighted with the mathematics, on account of the certitude and evidence of their reasonings: but I had not as yet a precise knowledge of their true use; and thinking that they but contributed to the advancement of the mechanical arts, I was astonished that foundations, so strong and solid, should have no loftier superstructure reared on them. On the other hand, I compared the disquisitions of the ancient moralists to very towering and magnificent palaces with no better foundation than sand and mud: they laud the virtues very highly, and exhibit them as estimable far above anything on earth; but they give us no adequate criterion of virtue, and frequently that which they designate with so fine a name is but apathy, or pride, or despair, or parricide.

I revered our theology, and aspired as much as any one to reach heaven: but being given assuredly to understand that the way is not less open to the most ignorant than to the most learned, and that the revealed truths which lead to heaven are above our comprehension, I did not presume to subject them to the impotency of my reason; and I thought that in order competently to undertake their examination, there was need of some special help from heaven, and of being more than man.

Of philosophy I will say nothing, except that when I saw that it had been cultivated for many ages by the most distinguished men, and that yet there is not a single matter within its sphere which is not still in dispute, and nothing, therefore, which is above doubt, I did not presume to anticipate that my success would be greater in it than that of others; and further, when I considered the number of conflicting opinions touching a single matter that may be upheld by learned men, while there can be but one true, I reckoned as well-nigh false all that was only probable.

As to the other sciences, inasmuch as these borrow their principles from philosophy, I judged that no solid superstructures could be reared on foundations so infirm; and neither the honour nor the gain held out by them was sufficient to determine me to their cultivation: for I was not, thank heaven, in a condition which compelled me to make merchandise of science for the bettering of my fortune; and though I might not profess to scorn glory as a cynic, I yet made very slight account of that honour which I hoped to acquire only through fictitious titles. And, in fine, of false sciences I thought I knew the worth sufficiently to escape being deceived by the professions of an alchemist, the predictions of an astrologer, the impostures of a magician, or by the artifices and boasting of any of those who profess to know things of which they are ignorant.

For these reasons, as soon as my age permitted me to pass from under the control of my instructors, I entirely abandoned the study of letters, and resolved no longer to seek any other science than the knowledge of myself, or of the great book of the world. I spent the remainder of my youth in traveling, in visiting courts and armies, in holding intercourse with men of different dispositions and ranks, in collecting varied experience, in proving myself in the different situations into which fortune threw me, and, above all, in making such reflection on the matter of my experience as to secure my improvement. For it occurred to me that I should find much more truth in the reasonings of each individual with reference to the affairs in which he is personally interested, and the issue of which must presently punish him if he has judged amiss, than in those

conducted by a man of letters in his study, regarding speculative matters that are of no practical moment, and followed by no consequences to himself, farther, perhaps, than that they foster his vanity the better the more remote they are from common sense; requiring, as they must in this case, the exercise of greater ingenuity and art to render them probable. In addition, I had always a most earnest desire to know how to distinguish the true from the false, in order that I might be able clearly to discriminate the right path in life, and proceed in it with confidence.

It is true that, while busied only in considering the manners of other men, I found here, too, scarce any ground for settled conviction, and remarked hardly less contradiction among them than in the opinion of the philosophers. So that the greatest advantage I derived from the study consisted in this, that, observing many things which, however extravagant and ridiculous to our apprehension, are yet by common consent received and approved by other great nations, I learned to entertain too decided a belief in regard to nothing of the truth of which I had been persuaded merely by example and custom: and thus I gradually extricated myself from many errors powerful enough to darken our Natural Intelligence, and incapacitate us in great measure listening to Reason. But after I had been occupied several years in thus studying the book of the world, and in essaying to gather some experience, I at length resolved to make myself an object of study, and to employ all the powers of my mind in choosing the paths I ought to follow; an undertaking which was accompanied with greater success than it would have been had I never quitted my country or my books.

## Part II

I was then in Germany, attracted thither by the wars in that country, which have not yet been brought to a termination; and as I was returning to the army from the coronation of the Emperor, the setting in of winter arrested me in a locality where, as I found no society to interest me, and was besides fortunately undisturbed by any cares or

passions, I remained the whole day in seclusion, with full opportunity to occupy my attention with my own thoughts. Of these one of the very first that occurred to me was, that there is seldom so much perfection in works composed of many separate parts, upon which different hands have been employed, as in those completed by a single master. Thus it is observable that the buildings which a single architect has planned and executed, are generally more elegant and commodious than those which several have attempted to improve, by making old walls serve for purposes for which they were not originally built. Thus also, those ancient cities which, from being at first only villages, have become, in course of time, large towns, are usually but ill laid out compared with the regularly constructed towns which a professional architect has freely planned on an open plain; so that although the several buildings of the former may often equal or surpass in beauty those of the latter, yet when one observes their indiscriminate juxtaposition, there a large one and here a small, and the streets, one is disposed to allege that chance rather than any human will guided by reason, must have led to such an arrangement. And if we consider that nevertheless there have been at all times certain officers whose duty it was to see that private buildings contributed to public ornament, the difficulty of reaching high perfection with but the materials of others to operate on, will be readily acknowledged. In the same way, I fancied that those nations which, starting from a semi-barbarous state and advancing to civilization by slow degrees, have had their laws successively determined, and, as it were forced upon them simply by experience of the hurtfulness of particular crimes and disputes, would by this process come to be possessed of less perfect institutions than those which, from the commencement of their association as communities, have followed the appointments of some wise legislator. It is thus quite certain that the constitution of the true religion, the ordinances of which are derived from God, must be incomparably superior to that of every other. And, to speak of human affairs, I believe that the past pre-eminence of Sparta was due not to the goodness of each of its laws in particular, for many of

these were very strange, and even opposed to good morals, but to the circumstance that, originated by a single individual, they all tended to a single end. In the same way I thought that the sciences contained in books (such of them at least as are made up of probable reasonings, without demonstrations), composed as they are of the opinions of many different individuals massed together, are farther removed from truth than the simple inferences which a man of good sense using his natural and unprejudiced judgment draws respecting the matters of his experience. And because we have all to pass through a state of infancy to manhood, and have been of necessity, for a length of time, governed by our desires and preceptors (whose dictates were frequently conflicting, while neither perhaps always counselled us for the best), I further concluded that it is almost impossible that our judgments can be so correct or solid as they would have been, had our Reason been mature from the moment of our birth, and had we always been guided by it alone.

It is true, however, that it is not customary to pull down all the houses of a town with the single design of rebuilding them differently, and thereby rendering the streets more handsome; but it often happens that a private individual takes down his own with the view of erecting it anew, and that people are even sometimes constrained to this when their houses are in danger of falling from age, or when the foundations are insecure. With this before me by way of example, I was persuaded that it would indeed be preposterous for a private individual to think of reforming a state by fundamentally changing it throughout, and overturning it in order to set it up amended; and the same I thought was true of any similar project for reforming the body of the Sciences, or the order of teaching them established in the Schools: but as for the opinions which up to that time I had embraced, I thought that I could not do better than resolve at once to sweep them wholly away, that I might afterwards be in a position to admit either others more correct, or even perhaps the same when they had undergone the scrutiny of Reason. I firmly believed that in this way I should much better succeed in the con-

duct of my life, than if I built only upon old foundations, and leant upon principles which, in my youth, I had taken upon trust. For although I recognized various difficulties in this undertaking, these were not, however, without remedy, nor once to be compared with such as attend the slightest reformation in public affairs. Large bodies, if once overthrown, are with great difficulty set up again, or even kept erect when once seriously shaken, and the fall of such is always disastrous. Then if there are any imperfections in the constitutions of states (and that many such exist the diversity of constitutions is alone sufficient to assure us), custom has without doubt materially smoothed their inconveniences, and has even managed to steer altogether clear of, or insensibly corrected a number which sagacity could not have provided against with equal effect; and, in fine, the defects are almost always more tolerable than the change necessary for their removal; in the same manner that highways which wind among mountains, by being much frequented, become gradually so smooth and commodious, that it is much better to follow them than to seek a straighter path by climbing over the tops of rocks and descending to the bottoms of precipices.

Hence it is that I cannot in any degree approve of those restless and busy meddlers who, called neither by birth nor fortune to take part in the management of public affairs, are yet always projecting reforms; and if I thought that this Tract contained aught which might justify the suspicion that I was a victim of such folly, I would by no means permit its publication. I have never contemplated anything higher than the reformation of my own opinions, and basing them on a foundation wholly my own. And although my own satisfaction with my work has led me to present here a draft of it, I do not by any means therefore recommend to every one else to make a similar attempt. Those whom God has endowed with a larger measure of genius will entertain, perhaps, designs still more exalted; but for the many I am much afraid lest even the present undertaking be more than they can safely venture to imitate. The single design to strip one's self of all past beliefs is one that ought not to be taken by every one. The majority

of men is composed of two classes, for neither of which would this be at all a befitting resolution: in the *first* place, of those who with more than a due confidence in their own powers, are precipitate in their judgments and want the patience requisite for orderly and circumspect thinking; whence it happens, that if men of this class once take the liberty to doubt of their accustomed opinions, and quit the beaten highway, they will never be able to thread the byway that would lead them by a shorter course, and will lose themselves and continue to wander for life; in the *second* place, of those who, possessed of sufficient sense or modesty to determine that there are others who excel them in the power of discriminating between truth and error, and by whom they may be instructed, ought rather to content themselves with the opinions of such than trust for more correct to their own Reason.

For my own part, I should doubtless have belonged to the latter class, had I received instruction from but one master, or had I never known the diversities of opinion that from time immemorial have prevailed among men of the greatest learning. But I had become aware, even so early as during my college life, that no opinion, however absurd and incredible, can be imagined, which has not been maintained by some one of the philosophers; and afterwards in the course of my travels I remarked that all those whose opinions are decidedly repugnant to ours are not on that account barbarians and savages, but on the contrary that many of these nations make an equally good, if not a better, use of their Reason than we do. I took into account also the very different character which a person brought up from infancy in France or Germany exhibits, from that which, with the same mind originally, this individual would have possessed had he lived always among the Chinese or with savages, and the circumstance that in dress itself the fashion which pleased us ten years ago, and which may again, perhaps, be received into favour before ten years have gone, appears to us at this moment extravagant and ridiculous. I was thus led to infer that the ground of our opinions is far more custom and example than any certain knowledge. And, finally, although such be the ground of

our opinions, I remarked that a plurality of suffrages is no guarantee of truth where it is at all of difficult discovery, as in such cases it is much more likely that it will be found by one than by many. I could, however, select from the crowd no one whose opinions seemed worthy of preference, and thus I found myself constrained, as it were, to use my own Reason in the conduct of my life.

But like one walking alone and in the dark, I resolved to proceed so slowly and with such circumspection, that if I did not advance far, I would at least guard against falling. I did not even choose to dismiss summarily any of the opinions that had crept into my belief without having been introduced by Reason, but first of all took sufficient time carefully to satisfy myself of the general nature of the task I was setting myself, and ascertain the true Method by which to arrive at the knowledge of whatever lay within the compass of my powers.

Among the branches of Philosophy, I had, at an earlier period, given some attention to Logic, and among those of the Mathematics to Geometrical Analysis and Algebra—three Arts or Sciences which ought, as I conceived, to contribute something to my design. But, on examination, I found that, as for Logic, its syllogisms and the majority of its other precepts are of avail rather in the communication of what we already know, or even as the Art of Lully, in speaking without judgment of things of which we are ignorant, than in the investigation of the unknown; and although this Science contains indeed a number of correct and very excellent precepts, there are, nevertheless, so many others, and these either injurious or superfluous, mingled with the former, that it is almost quite as difficult to effect severance of the true from the false as it is to extract a Diana or a Minerva from a rough block of marble. Then as to the Analysis of the ancients and the Algebra of the moderns, besides that they embrace only matters highly abstract, and, to appearance, of no use, the former is so exclusively restricted to the consideration of figures, that it can exercise the Understanding only on condition of greatly fatiguing the Imagination; and, in the latter, there is so complete a subjection to certain rules and formulas,

that there results an art full of confusion and obscurity calculated to embarrass, instead of a science fitted to cultivate the mind. By these considerations I was induced to seek some other Method which would comprise the advantages of the three and be exempt from their defects. And as a multitude of laws often only hampers justice, so that a state is best governed when, with few laws, these are rigidly administered; in like manner, instead of the great number of precepts of which Logic is composed, I believed that the four following would prove perfectly sufficient for me, provided I took the firm and unwavering resolution never in a single instance to fail in observing them.

The *first* was never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to comprise nothing more in my judgment than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt.

The *second,* to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution.

The *third,* to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know, I might ascend by little and little, and, as it were, step by step, to the knowledge of the more complex; assigning in thought a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not stand in a relation of antecedence and sequence.

And the *last,* in every case to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I might be assured that nothing was omitted.

The long chains of simple and easy reasonings by means of which geometers are accustomed to reach the conclusions of their most difficult demonstrations, had led me to imagine that all things, to the knowledge of which man is competent, are mutually connected in the same way, and that there is nothing so far removed from us as to be beyond our reach, or so hidden that we cannot discover it, provided only we abstain from accepting the false for the true, and always preserve in our thoughts the order necessary for the deduction of one truth from another.

I am in doubt as to the propriety of making my first meditations in the place above mentioned matter of discourse; for these are so metaphysical, and so uncommon, as not, perhaps, to be acceptable to every one. And yet, that it may be determined whether the foundations that I have laid are sufficiently secure, I find myself in a measure constrained to advert to them. I had long before remarked that, in (relation to) practice, it is sometimes necessary to adopt, as if above doubt, opinions which we discern to be highly uncertain, as has been already said; but as I then desired to give my attention solely to the search after truth, I thought that a procedure exactly the opposite was called for, and that I ought to reject as absolutely false all opinions in regard to which I could suppose the least ground for doubt, in order to ascertain whether after that there remained aught in my belief that was wholly indubitable. Accordingly, seeing that our senses sometimes deceive us, I was willing to suppose that there existed nothing really such as they presented to us; and because some men err in reasoning, and fall into paralogisms, even on the simplest matters of Geometry, I, convinced that I was as open to error as any other, rejected as false all the reasonings I had hitherto taken for demonstrations; and finally, when I considered that the very same thoughts (presentations) which we experience when awake may also be experienced when we are asleep, while there is at that time not one of them true, I supposed that all the objects (presentations) that had ever entered into my mind when awake, had in them no more truth than the illusions of my dreams. But immediately upon this I observed that, whilst I thus wished to think that all was false, it was absolutely necessary that I, who thus thought, should be somewhat; and as I observed that this truth, *I think, hence I am,* was so certain and of such evidence, that no ground of doubt, however extravagant, could be alleged by the Skeptics capable of shaking it, I concluded that I might, without scruple, accept it as the first principle of the Philosophy of which I was in search.

In the next place, I attentively examined what I was, and as I observed that I could suppose that I had no body,

and that there was no world nor any place in which I might be; but that I could not therefore suppose that I was not; and that, on the contrary, from the very circumstance that I thought to doubt of the truth of other things, it most clearly and certainly followed that I was; while, on the other hand, if I had only ceased to think, although all the other objects which I had ever imagined had been in reality existent, I would have had no reason to believe that I existed; I thence concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, that it may exist, has need of no place, nor is dependent on any material thing; so that "I," that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is wholly distinct from the body, and is even more easily known than the latter, and is such, that although the latter were not, it would still continue to be all that it is.

After this I inquired in general into what is essential to the truth and certainty of a proposition; for since I had discovered one which I knew to be true, I thought that I must likewise be able to discover the ground of this certitude. And as I observed that in the words *I think, hence I am,* there is nothing at all which gives me assurance of their truth beyond this, that I see very clearly that in order to think it is necessary to exist, I concluded that I might take, as a general rule, the principle, that all the things which we very clearly and distinctly conceive are true, only observing, however, that there is some difficulty in rightly determining the objects which we distinctly conceive.

## PASCAL

BLAISE PASCAL belonged to a family that had been ennobled in the fifteenth century and had thereafter performed public service almost continually. From one generation to another its members followed the legal profession. Blaise was born in 1623; his mother died when he was very young, leaving his father with two daughters and one son. The father resolved to do everything in his power to atone for their maternal loss. He gave up his work in the Clermont court and removed to Paris, where he instructed the children himself. Blaise early manifested an unusual predilection for mathematics and wanted to study geometry but, fearing that close attention would overtax the young boy, his father refused to instruct him in it. Presently he discovered that his son had mastered Euclid by himself; thereupon the best instruction was provided for him. When sixteen, Blaise wrote a treatise on Conic Sections. He afterwards constructed a calculating machine and in other ways pursued mathematical study and made such application of it that he injured his health. He suffered a slight stroke and was obliged to remain inactive for a while. His later undertakings were often interrupted by physical disability.

It is impossible to discuss the brilliant writings of Pascal without taking into account the religious dissensions of the seventeenth century. Churchmen had fallen into such laxity and indulgence that not only had the Protestant revolt been precipitated, but among those who had no desire to sever connection with Rome there was much dissatisfaction and strong reactions were manifested. To the devout and pious, the sight of men who had taken orders, like Richelieu and Mazarin—who, whether or not he took orders, received a Cardinal's hat—amassing enormous fortunes and living worldly lives, was most disturbing. Some of them wanted to recover the simple faith taught by the founder of the Christian religion. Various movements were made by little sects within the Church to follow in the

steps of the Early Christian Fathers. One was led by a Dutchman, the bishop of Ypres. Bishop Jansen or Jansenius, turned back to the writings of St. Augustine, who had been greatly influenced by St. Paul. In Paul's *Epistles to the Romans* he had spoken of original sin, of justification by grace alone and of predestination. Such subjects had given rise to endless theological discussions during the Middle Ages. The Jansenists, as the followers of the Dutch bishop were called, espoused his doctrines, which involved the renunciation of all worldliness and the pursuance of austere lives. Deep animosities grew up between the Jesuits and the Jansenists, the rigid principles of the latter being a constant reproach to the somewhat flexible teachings of the former. The Jansenists settled at Port Royal, a valley a few miles distant from Paris, which had once been the site of a Cistercian convent. The Jesuits used every effort to have the doctrines of the Jansenists declared heretical. They framed five principles—which the Jansenists declared apart from their teachings—and sent them to Rome as embodying the doctrines taught at Port Royal. These were condemned. The Sorbonne censured Arnauld, the Jansenist leader at Port Royal and this little religious settlement felt that its cause should now be given due consideration. It was at this juncture of the struggle that a series of letters appeared by an anonymous writer. They are known as the *Provincial Letters,* by Pascal. In eighteen epistles, all told, he flayed the methods and practices of the Jesuits and while it has been shown that his satire was sometimes more brilliant than fair, it has been also claimed that the Order has never fully recovered from his biting attacks. The masterly style of the writer is evident when we read that French prose has never progressed far nor needed to progress beyond the excellence displayed in these letters.

It has been surmised that the heart of the author was touched by a criticism to the effect that he might better employ his gifts for the building up rather than tearing down of religion. Thereupon he seems to have set himself at constructive work, accumulating notes for a book which was never written because of his untimely death. Frag-

mentary *Pensées* were garbled and misconstrued in the early editions made of them, and not until the middle of the nineteenth century was a fairly authentic version given to the public. These *Thoughts* have given occasion for much speculation as to what might have been the nature of Pascal's projected volume. Certain it is that he directly opposed Descartes, who based everything on *Reason.* Pascal felt that truth must be apprehended through *Revelation* alone.

Through all ages two types of mind have been found: one the argumentative, seeking to prove all things, the other, content to accept them on faith alone. On the one hand, St. Bernard, with his insistent counsel: "Do not question: only believe"; on the other, Abelard: "By doubting, we are led to inquire; through inquiry, we arrive at truth."

Pascal's sister, Jacqueline, became convinced of the soundness of Jansenist teaching and took up her abode at Port Royal in 1650; her brother followed her in 1654. Here the adherents of Jansenism dwelt in isolation, desiring to devote themselves to a life of contemplation and worship. After the condemnation of the "Five Principles" and later, when Jansenism had itself been condemned by the Holy See as heretical, the inhabitants of this quiet vale were asked to subscribe to their own heresies; refusing which, the settlement was broken up by the police and the buildings demolished by the order of Louis XIV. Nowhere does the pettiness of the great king appear more glaring than in his attack upon this little community of humble men and women who wanted to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, at the same time holding to the Church which was dear to them. "In ancient days," said Pascal, "men were not admitted to the Church until they had renounced the world, but now they enter both Church and world at the same time." At a time when clerics desired to have a part in state affairs as well as those pertaining to religion, the spectacle of men voluntarily withdrawing from public life and devoting themselves to prayer and piety was likely to prove a thorn in the flesh. Jansenism has been called "an episode in the Catholic Reaction, or Counter Revolution"; though short-lived, it made a deep impression upon its age.

## From PASCAL'S THOUGHTS

### 9

When we wish to correct with advantage, and to show another that he errs, we must notice from what side he views the matter, for on that side it is usually true, and admit that truth to him, but reveal to him the side on which it is false. He is satisfied with that, for he sees that he was not mistaken, and that he only failed to see all sides. Now, no one is offended at not seeing everything; but one does not like to be mistaken, and that perhaps arises from the fact that man naturally cannot see everything, and that naturally he cannot err in the side he looks at, since the perceptions of our senses are always true.

### 16

Eloquence is an art of saying things in such a way—(1) that those to whom we speak may listen to them without pain and with pleasure; (2) that they feel themselves interested, so that self-love leads them more willingly to reflection upon it.

It consists, then, in a correspondence which we seek to establish between the head and the heart of those to whom we speak on the one hand, and, on the other, between the thoughts and the expressions which we employ. This assumes that we have studied well the heart of man so as to know all its powers, and then to find the just proportions of the discourse which we wish to adapt to them. We must put ourselves in the place of those who are to hear us, and make trial on our own heart of the turn which we give to our discourse in order to see whether one is made for the other, and whether we can assure ourselves that the hearer will be, as it were, forced to surrender. We ought to restrict ourselves, so far as possible, to the simple and natural, and not to magnify that which is little, or belittle that which is great. It is not enough that a thing be beautiful; it must be suitable to the subject, and there must be in it nothing of excess or defect.

22

Let no one say that I have said nothing new; the arrangement of the subject is new. When we play tennis, we both play with the same ball, but one of us places it better.

I had as soon it said that I used words employed before. And in the same way if the same thoughts in a different arrangement do not form a different discourse, no more do the same words in their different arrangement form different thoughts!

37

Since we cannot be universal and know all that is to be known of everything, we ought to know a little about everything. For it is far better to know something about everything than to know all about one thing. This universality is the best. If we can have both, still better; but if we must choose, we ought to choose the former. And the world feels this and does so; for the world is often a good judge.

121

Nature always begins the same things again, the years, the days, the hours; in like manner spaces and numbers follow each other from beginning to end. Thus is made a kind of infinity and eternity. Not that anything in all this is infinite and eternal, but these finite realities are infinitely multiplied. Thus it seems to me to be only the number which multiplies them that is infinite.

129

Our nature consists in motion; complete rest is death.

130

*Restlessness*—If a soldier, or laborer, complains of the hardship of his lot, set him to do nothing.

136

A mere trifle consoles us, for a mere trifle distresses us.

257

There are only three kinds of persons: those who serve God, having found Him; others who are occupied in seeking

Him, not having found Him; while the remainder live without seeking Him, and without having found Him. The first are reasonable and happy, the last are foolish and unhappy; those between are unhappy and unreasonable.

381

When we are too young, we do not judge well; so, also, when we are too old. If we do not think enough, or if we think too much on any matter, we get obstinate and infatuated about it. If one considers one's work immediately after having done it, one is entirely prepossessed in its favor; by delaying too long, one can no longer enter into the spirit of it. So with pictures seen from too far or too near; there is but one exact point which is the true place wherefrom to look at them: the rest are too near, too far, too high, or too low. Perspective determines that point in the art of painting. But who shall determine it in truth and morality?

386

If we dreamt the same thing every night, it would affect us as much as the objects we see every day. And if an artisan were sure to dream every night twelve hours' duration that he was a king, I believe he would be almost as happy as a king, who should dream every night for twelve hours on end that he was an artisan.

If we were to dream every night that we were pursued by enemies, and harassed by these painful phantoms, or that we passed every day in different occupations, as in making a voyage, we should suffer almost as much as if it were real, and should fear to sleep, as we fear to wake when we dread in fact to enter on such mishaps. And, indeed, it would cause pretty nearly the same discomforts as the reality.

But since dreams are all different, and each single one is diversified, what is seen in them affects us much less than what we see when awake, because of its continuity, which is not, however, so continuous and level as not to change too; but it changes less abruptly, except rarely, as when we travel, and then we say, "It seems to me I am dreaming." For life is a dream a little less inconstant.

534

There are only two kinds of men: the righteous, who believe themselves sinners; the rest, sinners, who believe themselves righteous.

859

There is a pleasure in being in a ship beaten about by a storm, when we are sure that it will not founder. The persecutions which harass the Church are of this nature.

864

Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established, that unless we love the truth, we cannot know it.

895

Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.

## FÉNELON

THE life of François de Fénelon coincided with the latter half of the reign of Louis XIV. He was born in 1651 and died a few months before the aged king. His writings have been the subject of considerable controversy and even today critics differ widely in their estimate of him.

Whereas Descartes was concerned in reaching conclusions which would be true for him personally, Fénelon looked out upon the world with the eyes of a teacher, continually formulating his convictions for the guidance of others. One can but wonder whether, had he regarded himself simply as a man among men, the record of his thoughts and experiences might not have had a more enduring value. As it is, he is acknowledged to have been one of the foremost thinkers of his age.

François de Fénelon came of an ancient noble family, distinguished for its ancestral pride and culture. Although much reduced in material worth, its members were accorded a high social position.

As a boy, François received thorough grounding in the classics and was then sent to a provincial college. Later he joined his uncle in Paris, spending several years in rigorous training for the Church. His early work was done during those unhappy years when the great Louis was attempting, by means fair or foul, to convert his Huguenot subjects to the faith of the majority. The methods employed seem abhorrent today. Fénelon incurred the censure of those in authority for his toleration, but it is best to pass over those dark days of religious persecution.

In course of time Fénelon was chosen as tutor for the sons of the Dauphin. The eldest, the Duke of Burgundy, was regarded as the probable heir to the French throne, considering the advanced age of his father. His brother, the Duke of Anjou, later Philip V of Spain, and a younger brother, were his companions in study. Fénelon had definite ideas as to how a country should be governed and, in an unguarded moment, confided to Madame de Maintenon

that Louis XIV did not sufficiently grasp his duties. To guide the heir presumptive in formative years was therefore a congenial task except when the boy's sudden fits of anger and passionate nature imposed difficulties.

Fénelon, with his rich store of knowledge, appears to have succeeded in making learning attractive to his young charges and to have imparted a love for study in the mind of Burgundy but it may well be asked whether his influence in other respects was desirable for the youth.

One possessed of high ideals must needs seek refuge from the materialism of an age such as that of Louis XIV. Fénelon was a mystic and found solace in spiritual contemplation.

The student of mysticism finds it instructive to compare its various forms as set forth by St. Francis of Assissi, Bernard of Clairvaux and other mystics. Fénelon's life had been one long conflict; in his early years—perhaps always—he was torn between his lofty conception of his part as a follower of Christ and an inborn sense of pride and prejudice common to those of his class. Self was foremost and his determination to obliterate it became an obsession. At no time did he know that self-abandon which comes to those who, like St. Francis, completely lose themselves in serving others. The ego permeates Fénelon's writings and nowhere is it more prominent than in his best known book, which he termed a "fabulous narrative."

Fénelon was guileless and the difficulties that soon beset him came because of his total lack of precaution and foresight. Policy was foreign to him, but, in an age of intrigue and deceit, purity of mind and honest candor were likely to involve one in perplexities, as he was doomed to learn. Madame Guyon, a religious enthusiast, conceived the teaching of Fénelon to be in agreement with her own. Lack of restraint in her writings resulted in her arrest and stern rebuke by the Church. Fénelon thought her misunderstood and espoused her cause, publishing his *Maxims of the Saints,* precepts which embodied his mystical reflections and conclusions. This writing brought down upon him the wrath of Bossuet, one of the powerful Catholic orators of the times, as well as the deep displeasure of the king.

Fénelon was dismissed from court and sent to his diocese.

Convinced that his earnest religious fervor could not merit the disapproval of his beloved Church, Fénelon insisted that his case be appealed to Rome. The Pope had no desire to reprove so exemplary an archbishop as Fénelon, but certain of his statements were declared to be unorthodox. Louis XIV brought all possible pressure to bear on the Curia to obtain Fénelon's condemnation but failed to elicit further expression of disapproval than this.

While this religious controversy was being made the subject of considerable agitation and pamphleteering, a secular book by Fénelon suddenly appeared in print. In fact, the first sheets were seized by the French police, but the work found its way to Holland and was published there. It was written in imitation of the Odyssey, presumably for the moral instruction of Burgundy, with the object of impressing upon his mind an ideal state and the real duties of a king. Fénelon himself explained it as follows:

"Telemaque is a fabulous narrative in the form of an heroic poem, like those of Homer or Virgil, in which I have set down the truths most necessary to be known by one who is about to reign; there also are described the faults that cling most closely to the sovereign power. But I have borrowed from no real persons. I have sketched no characters of our time: my book was written at chance moments hurriedly and piece by piece; it was sent to the press by an unfaithful copyist, and was never intended for the world."

That it may have been published surreptitiously is easy to believe. Such was the fate of many a writing before protection of any kind had been provided for authors. It is more difficult to credit the statement that Fénelon had no contemporary characters in mind when he satirized, by contrast at least, the king under the name of Idomeneus; the Dauphin as Boccharis; William of Orange, as Adrastus; the Duke of Burgundy as Telemachus. The tale is told in the guise of the Odyssey, Telemachus relating his experiences during the first few books. By portraying the ideal state, another Utopia, the contrast with existing affairs

in France was sharply implied. Fénelon is represented by the character of Mentor, whose profound wisdom is at all times sufficient. In Book X we may read: "But as Mentor was perfectly acquainted with all that was necessary to render a kingdom flourishing, he had reason to believe that the power of Idomeneus was not so great in reality as in appearance; he therefore took him aside, and addressed him to this effect:

"The government of the people depends upon you. . . . You have thought neither of augmenting your people nor of cultivating the country. . . . You have been hurried, by a vain ambition, to the brink of a precipice. To gain the appearance of being great, you have sapped the foundation of substantial grandeur. Let these errors be corrected without delay.' " Again, in the same book:

"For you are a king, only to be the shepherd of your people, and to watch over your flock night and day. . . . Remember that the sovereign who is most absolute is always least powerful.' "

Numerous passages containing similar descriptions of ideal sovereigns and kingdoms abound. It could not reasonably be expected that the *Grand Monarch,* who was accustomed only to fulsome praise, would desire his reign to be held up in contrast so disparagingly by the tutor of his grandson. When we read that his cup of wrath overflowed as he examined the book, it is easy to credit the statement. Instead of alleviating the strained relations between king and subject, upon publication of *Telemaque,* as might have been expected, Fénelon lost most of the friends who had supported him during the trying situation precipitated by the appearance of his *Maxims of the Saints.*

In view of the quick decision, confidence and self-reliance which sovereigns require for the satisfactory dispatch of state affairs, many passages in the eighteen books comprising *Telemaque* confirm an impression otherwise to be gained, that the influence of Fénelon, with his ceaseless introspection and morbid self-analysis, reacted unfavorably upon the young Duke entrusted to his care. His egotism was so pronounced that it is certain a youth would be but putty in his hands. Telemachus is endowed with the un-

governable temper and passion so characteristic of Burgundy.

"The Mentor said nothing more to Telemachus. He treated him as a man infected with an incurable disease, to whom it was in vain to administer remedies. . . . Telemachus was sensible of his weakness, and conscious that he was unworthy of the friendship of Mentor. He kept his eyes fixed upon the ground, not daring to look up, lest he should meet those of his monitor, by whose very silence he was condemned."

"Choking with emotion," Telemachus is forever "confessing his weaknesses to Mentor" and being assured that he should distrust himself and turn to his sure guide: 'My dear Mentor, why did I reject your advice? What greater evil can befall me than a confidence in my own opinion, at an age which can form no judgment of the future, has gained no experience from the past, and knows not how to employ the present?' "

When we learn that in after years Burgundy vacillated and was unable to come to prompt conclusions, the pernicious result of his training is conclusively shown. Small wonder was it that the nobles pictured with dismay a prince upon the throne who should be influenced in all things by one of these pronounced convictions, who claimed that children belonged to the state rather than their parents and that the king should prescribe their training and mould them to serve his wise purposes.

There is, however, another aspect to the story, of wider consequence for the future: *Telemaque* is the earliest French writing to convey the impression that, in spite of appearances, the years of absolutism in France were already numbered. Fénelon was first to voice ideas which were destined soon to spread throughout the length and breadth of the land.

"All men are brothers, and yet they hunt each other as prey. The wild beasts of the desert are less cruel. . . . And for what are these wars undertaken? Is there not land enough in the world for every man to appropriate more than he can cultivate? What then is the motive to war? Some tyrant sighs for a new appellation—he would

be called a conqueror; and for this he kindles a flame that desolates the earth. . . . Let those who fancy they are demi-gods henceforth remember that they are less than men, and let every succeeding age by which they have hoped to be admired, hold them in execration."

The book contained many prophetic words, such, for example, as these: "Absolute power degrades every subject to a slave. The tyrant is flattered, even to the appearance of adoration, and every one trembles at the glance of his eye; but, at the least revolt, this enormous power perishes by its own excess. . . . At the first stroke of opposition the idol is overturned, broken to pieces and trodden under foot."

It has sometimes been argued that the deluge might have been averted had the Duke of Burgundy taken hold of the affairs of state with the counsel of his former teacher. By his premature death, occurring before that of Louis XIV, all hopes centered in him were terminated. He, his wife and eldest son were all carried off by a pestilence, leaving his younger son, known later as Louis XV, to bring such abilities as he might possess to the problems of French government.

## From TELEMACHUS

### By Fénelon

### Book XVII

Telemachus was now impatient to rejoin Mentor at Salentum, and to embark with him for Ithaca, where he hoped his father would arrive before him. As he approached the city, he was astonished to see that the neighboring country, which he had left almost a desert, was now in the highest state of cultivation, and swarmed like a hive with the children of industry and labor: this change he imputed to the wisdom of Mentor. But when he entered the city, and perceived that its appearance was much less magnificent, and that fewer hands were employed to furnish the luxuries of life, he was displeased, for he was naturally fond of elegance and splendor. His displeasure, however, soon gave way to other sentiments: he saw Idomeneus and Mentor at a distance coming to meet him. His heart instantly overflowed with tenderness and joy. It was not, however, without some mixture of anxiety; for, notwithstanding his success in the expedition against Adrastus, he doubted whether his conduct, upon the whole, would be approved by Mentor, and endeavored to read his sentiments in his eyes as he approached.

Idomeneus embraced Telemachus with the affection of a parent, and Telemachus, as soon as he was disengaged, threw himself upon the neck of Mentor, and burst into tears. "I am satisfied," said Mentor: "you have indeed committed great faults, but they have acquainted you with your infirmities, and warned you of self-confidence. More advantage is sometimes derived from disappointment than from success. Great achievements frequently produce contemptible vainglory, and dangerous presumption; but disappointments from ill-conduct make the man a censor of himself, and restore the wisdom which success had taken away. You are not to seek praise from men, but to offer it with humility to the gods. You have indeed performed noble exploits, but you must confess that you were rather the instrument than

the agent: were they not affected by powers communicated from without? and were they not frequently endangered by your precipitation and imprudence? Are you not conscious that Minerva exalted you into a nature superior to your own, and that, only after this transformation, you became equal to the achievements that you performed? Minerva suspended your passions, as Neptune suspends the swelling waves, when he commands the tempest to be still."

While Idomeneus was gratifying his curiosity by making various inquiries of the Cretans that had returned from the war, Telemachus was listening to the wisdom of Mentor. At length, looking around him with astonishment, he said: "I see many alterations here, of which I cannot comprehend the cause: has any misfortune happened to Salentum in my absence? The magnificence and splendor in which I left it have disappeared. I see neither silver, nor gold, nor jewels: the habits of the people are plain, the buildings are smaller and more simple, the arts languish, and the city has become a desert."

"Have you observed," replied Mentor with a smile, "the state of the country that lies around it?" "Yes," said Telemachus, "I perceive that agriculture has become an honorable profession, and that there is not a field uncultivated." "And which is best," replied Mentor, "a superb city abounding with marble, and silver, and gold, with a sterile and neglected country, or a country in a state of high cultivation and fruitful as a garden, with a city where sobriety of manners has taken the place of pomp? A great city, full of artificers, who are employed only to effeminate the manners, by furnishing the superfluities of luxury, surrounded by a poor and uncultivated country, resembles a monster with a head of enormous size, and a withered, enervated body, without beauty, vigor, or proportion. The genuine strength and true riches of a kingdom consist in the number of people, and the plenty of provisions. An innumerable people now cover the whole territory of Idomeneus, which they cultivate with unwearied diligence and assiduity. His dominions may be considered as one town, of which Salentum is the center. The people that were wanting in the fields, and superfluous in the city, we

have removed from the city to the fields. We have also brought in many foreigners. As the produce of the earth will always be in proportion to the number of persons that till it, this quiet and peaceable multitude is a much more valuable acquisition than a new conquest. We have expelled those arts which divert the poor from procuring by agriculture the necessaries of life, and corrupt the wealthy, by giving them the superfluities of luxury and pride; but we have done no injury to the fine arts, nor to those who have a true genius for their cultivation. Idomeneus has thus become much more powerful than he was when you admired his magnificence. This false splendor, by dazzling the eye, concealed such weakness and misery as would in a short time have subverted his empire. He has now a much greater number of subjects, and he subsists them with greater facility. These people, inured to labor and hardship and set above a fond and effeminate attachment to life, by the wise institutions of the government under which they live, are always ready to take the field in defense of the country which they have cultivated with their own hands; and the State which you think is in decay, will shortly be the wonder of Hesperia.

"Remember, O my son, that there are two evils in government which admit of no remedy—an inequitable and despotic power in the prince, and a luxurious depravity of manners in the people.

"Princes that have been accustomed to consider their will only as law, and to give the reins to their passions, may do anything; but their power of doing anything is necessarily subverted by its own excess; their government is capriciously administered without maxim or principle; they are universally feared and flattered; their subjects degenerate into slaves; and of these slaves the number is perpetually diminishing. Who shall dare to affront them with truth? Who shall stem the torrent of destruction? It swells over all bounds; the wise fly before it, and sigh in secret over the ruins of their country. Some sudden and violent revolution only can reduce this enormous power within proper bounds; and by that which alone can restrain it, it is frequently destroyed. Nothing is so certain a

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presage of irremediable destruction, as authority pushed to excess; it is like a bow that is over-bent, which if not relaxed, will suddenly break; and who shall venture to relax it? This excessive, this fatal but flattering power, has been once the ruin of Idomeneus; he was dethroned but not undeceived. Of this power, which, as it is not intended for mankind, can be assumed only to their ruin, he would still have been the dupe, if the gods had not sent us hither for his deliverance; and, after all, events scarcely less than miracles have been necessary to open his eyes.

"The other almost incurable evil is luxury. As the prince is corrupted by an excess of power, the people are corrupted by luxury. It has been said, indeed, that luxury feeds the poor at the expense of the rich; but certainly the poor may be subsisted by useful employment; if they apply themselves to multiply the products of the earth, they will be under no necessity to corrupt the rich by the refinements of luxury. A deviation from the simplicity of nature is sometimes so general, that a whole nation considers the most trifling superfluities as the necessaries of life; these factitious necessaries multiply every day, and people can no longer subsist without things which thirty years before had never been is existence. This luxury is called taste, perfection of the arts, and refinement of the nation. This vice, which superinduces almost every other, is cultivated and commended as a virtue. Its contagion spreads from the prince to the meanest of his people. The royal family imitate the magnificence of the king; the nobles, that of the royal family; the middle class, that of the nobles; and the poor—for who makes a just estimate of himself?—would intrude upon the class above them. All live above their condition; some from ostentation, and to glory in their wealth; some from a false shame, and to conceal their poverty. Even those who discover the mischief of this general folly, want fortitude to set the examples of reformation. All conditions are confounded, and the nation is undone. A desire of gain to support this idle expense, taints by degrees the purest minds; wealth is the only object of desire, and poverty the only mark of disgrace. You may have learning, talents, and virtue; you

may diffuse knowledge, you may win battles, save your country, and sacrifice your interest; and after all, if your merit is not set off by the glitter of fashionable expense, you will sink into obscurity and contempt. Even those who are without money, will not appear to want it; they live at the same expense as if they had it; they borrow, they cheat, and practice a thousand scandalous expedients to procure it. But who shall apply a remedy to these evils? New laws must be instituted, and the taste and habit of the whole nation must be changed. Who is equal to such an undertaking, but he who is at once a philosopher and a prince; who, by the example of his own moderation, can shame those that are fond of ostentation and parade, and keep the wise in countenance, who would rejoice to be encouraged in an honest frugality?"

Telemachus, while he listened to this discourse, perceived the delusions of his mind to vanish, like a man that wakes from a dream. He was now conscious of truth, and his heart was transformed to its image, as marble to the idea of the sculptor, when he gives it the features, the attitude, and the softness of life. At first he made no reply; but while he recollected what he had heard, he attentively reviewed the alterations that had been made in the city.

At length, turning to Mentor, he said: "You have made Idomeneus one of the wisest princes upon earth; I no longer know either him or his people. I am now convinced that your achievements here are much greater than ours in the field. The success of war is, in a great degree, the effect of personal prowess and chance, and the commander must always share the glory of conquest with his men; but your work is properly and exclusively your own; you have alone opposed a whole nation and its prince, and you have corrected the manners and principles of both. The success of war is always fatal and horrid: all here is the work of celestial wisdom; all is gentle, pure, and lovely; all indicates an authority more than human. When man is desirous of glory, why does he not seek it by works of benevolence like these? Oh, how false are their notions of glory, who hope to acquire it by ravaging the earth, and by destroying mankind!"

At this exclamation of Telemachus, Mentor felt a secret joy, that brightened in his countenance; for it convinced him that his pupil had reduced the value of conquest and triumph to their true standard at an age when it would have been but natural to overrate the glory he had acquired.

"It is true," replied Mentor, after a pause, "all that Idomeneus has done here is right, and deserves commendation; but he may do still better. He has now brought his passions under subjection, and applies himself to the government of his people upon just principles; but he has still great faults, which seem to be the progeny of faults that are past. When we make an effort to leave familiar vices, they seem to follow us; bad habits, relaxation of mind, inveterate errors, and strong prejudices long remain. Happy are those who never deviated into error! Their rectitude, and theirs only, can be uniform and constant. The gods, O Telemachus, require more from you than from Idomeneus, because you have been made acquainted with truth from your earliest infancy, and have never been exposed to the seduction of unbounded prosperity.

"Idomeneus," continued Mentor, "is by no means deficient either in penetration or knowledge; but he wastes his abilities upon little things; he is too much busied upon parts to comprehend the whole. The proof of abilities in a king, as the supreme governor of others, does not consist in doing every thing himself: to attempt it is a poor ambition; and to suppose that others will believe it can be done, an idle hope. In government, the king should not be the body, but the soul; by his influence, and under his direction, the hands should operate, and the feet should walk. He should conceive what is to be done, but he should appoint others to do it. His abilities will appear in the conception of his designs, and especially in the choice of his instruments. He should never stoop to their function, nor suffer them to aspire to his. Neither should he trust them implicitly; he ought to examine their proceedings, and be equally able to detect a want of judgment or integrity. He governs well who discerns the various characters and abilities of men, and employs them to administer government under him, in departments that are exactly suited to their talents.

The perfection of supreme government consists in the governing of those that govern. He that presides, should try, restrain, and correct them; he should encourage, raise, change, and displace them; he should keep them forever under his eye, and in his hand; but, to make the minute particulars of their subordinate departments objects of personal application, indicates meanness and suspicion, and fills the mind with petty anxieties, that leave it neither time nor liberty for designs that are worthy of royal attention. To form great designs, the mind must be free and tranquil; no intricacies of business must embarrass or perplex, no subordinate objects must divide the attention. A mind that is exhausted upon minute particulars, resembles the lees of wine, that have neither flavor nor strength. A king that busies himself in doing the duty of his servants, is always determined by present appearances, and never extends his view to futurity; he is always absorbed by the business of the day that is passing over him; and this being his only object, it acquires an undue importance, which, if compared with others, it would lose. The mind that admits but one object at a time, must naturally contract; and it is impossible to judge well of any affair, without considering many, comparing them with each other, and ranging them in a certain order, by which their relative importance will appear. He that neglects this rule in government resembles a musician, who should content himself with the discovery of melodious tones, one by one, and never think of combining or harmonizing them into music, which would not only gratify the ear, but affect the heart. Or he may be compared to an architect, who should fancy the powers of his art exhausted, by heaping together large columns, and great quantities of stone curiously carved, without considering the proportion of his building, or the arrangement of his ornaments. Such an artist, when he was building a saloon, would not reflect that a suitable staircase should be added; and when he was busy upon the body of the building, he would forget the courtyard and the portal. His work would be nothing more than a confused assemblage of parts, not suited to each other, not concurring to form a whole. Such a work would be so far

from doing him honor, that it would be a perpetual monument of disgrace. It would show that his range of thought was not sufficient to include all the parts of his design at once, that his mind was contracted, and his genius subordinate, for he that sees only from part to part, is fit only to execute the designs of another. Be assured, my dear Telemachus, that the government of a kingdom requires a certain harmony like music, and just proportions like architecture.

"If you will give me leave to carry on the parallel between these arts and government, I can easily make you comprehend the inferiority of those who administer government by parts, and not as a whole. He that sings particular parts in a concert, however great his skill or excellent his voice, is still but a singer; he who regulates all the parts, and conducts the whole, is the master of music. So, he that fashions the columns, and carries up the sides of a building, is no more than a mason; but he who has designed the whole, and whose mind sees all the relations of part to part, is the architect. Those, therefore, who are most busy, who dispatch the greatest number of affairs, can least be said to govern; they are only the inferior workmen. The presiding mind, the genius that governs the State, is he who, doing nothing, causes all to be done; who meditates, contrives, looks forward to the future, and back to the past; who sees relative proportions, arranges all things in order, and provides for remote contingencies; who keeps himself in perpetual exercise to wrestle with fortune, as the swimmer struggles with a torrent; and whose mind is night and day upon the stretch, that, anticipating all events, nothing may be left to chance.

"Do you think, my dear Telemachus, that a great painter is incessantly toiling that he may dispatch his work with the greater expedition? No! such drudgery and constraint would quench all the fire of imagination; he would no longer work like a genius, for the genius works as he is impelled by the power of fancy, in sudden, vigorous, but irregular sallies. Does the genius spend his time in grinding colors and preparing pencils? No! he leaves that to others who are yet in the rudiments of his art. He reserves

himself for the labors of the mind; he transfers his ideas to the canvas in bold and glowing strokes, which give dignity to his figures, and animate them not only with life but passion. His mind teems with the thoughts and sentiments of the heroes he is to represent; he is carried back to the ages in which they lived, and to the circumstances in which they were placed. But with this fervid enthusiasm he possesses also a judgment that restrains and regulates it, so that his whole work, however bold and animated, is perfectly consonant with propriety and truth. And can it be imagined that less elevation of genius, less effort of thought, is necessary to make a great king than a good painter? Let us therefore conclude that the province of a king is to think, to form great designs, and to make choice of men properly qualified to carry them into execution."

"I think," said Telemachus, "that I perfectly comprehend your meaning; but surely a king who leaves the dispatch of public business to others will be often imposed upon." "You are mistaken," replied Mentor, "a general knowledge of government will always secure him against imposition. Those who are not acquainted with radical principles, and have not sagacity to discern the talents and characters of men, are always seeking their way like men in the dark. If these, indeed, escape imposition, it is by chance, for they have not a clear and perfect knowledge of what they seek, nor in what direction they should move to find it; their knowledge is just sufficient to excite suspicion; and they are rather suspicious of integrity that opposes them with truth, than of fraud that seduces them by flattery. Those, on the contrary, who know the principles of government, and can distinguish the characters of men, know what is to be expected from them, and how to obtain it; they know, at least, whether the persons they employ are, in general, proper instruments to execute their designs, and whether they conceive and adopt their views with sufficient precision and abilities to carry them into effect. Besides, as their attention is not divided by embarrassing particulars, they keep the great object steadily in view, and can always judge whether they are approaching it. If they are sometimes deceived, it is in accidental and

trifling matters that are not essential to the principal design. They are also superior to little jealousies, which are always marks of a narrow mind and grovelling disposition; they know that in great affairs they must in some particulars be deceived, because they are obliged to make use of men, and men are often deceitful. More is lost by the delay and irresolution which arises from want of confidence in those who must be employed, than from petty frauds, by which that confidence is abused. He is comparatively happy who is disappointed only in affairs of small moment. The great work may go on with success, and it is about this only that a great man ought to be solicitous. Fraud, indeed, should be severely punished when it is discovered, but he that would not be deceived in matters of importance must in trifles be content to be deceived. An artificer, in his workroom, sees everything with his own eye, and does everything with his own hand; but a king who presides over a great nation can neither see all nor do all. He ought, indeed, to do nothing himself but what another cannot do under him; and to see nothing that is not essential to some determination of great importance.

"You, Telemachus," continued Mentor, "are a favorite of the gods, and it is their pleasure to distinguish your reign by wisdom. All that you see here is done less for the glory of Idomeneus, than for your instruction. If your virtues correspond with the designs of heaven, the wise institutions that you admire in Salentum are but as shadows to the substance, in comparison with what you will one day do in Ithaca. But Idomeneus has now prepared a ship for our departure, and it is time that we should think of quitting the coast of Hesperia."

The sails now swell with the breeze, the anchor is weighed, and the shore seems to retreat. The experienced pilot perceives at a distance the promontory of Leucate, which conceals its summit in the hoary mists that are blown around it by the freezing whirlwind, and the Acroceraunian mountains, which still lift their presumptuous brow to heaven, though blasted so often by the bolts of Jove.

"I believe," said Telemachus to Mentor, during the voyage, "that I now perfectly understand the maxims of gov-

ernment that you have given me. They appear, at first, like the confused images of a dream; but, by degrees, they become clear and distinct—as all objects appear obscure and cloudy at the first dawn of the morning, but at length rise gradually, like a new creation out of chaos, as the light, increasing by insensible degrees, gives them their true forms and natural colors. I am persuaded that the great secret of government is to distinguish the different characters of men, to select them for different purposes, and allot to each the employment which is most suited to his talents; but I am still to learn how characters are thus to be distinguished."

"Men," replied Mentor, "to be known, must be studied, and to be studied they must frequently be seen and talked to. Kings ought to converse with their subjects, hear their sentiments, and consult them; they should also trust them with some small employment, and see how they discharge it, in order to judge whether they are capable of more important service. By what means, my dear Telemachus, did you acquire, in Ithaca, your knowledge of horses? Was it not by seeing them frequently, and by conversing with persons of experience concerning their excellence and defects? In the same manner, converse with the wise and good, who have grown old in the study of human nature, concerning the defects and excellence of men; you will thus, insensibly, acquire a nice discernment of character, and know what may be expected from every man that falls under your observation. How have you been taught to distinguish the poet from the mere writer of verses, but by frequent reading, and conversation with persons who have a good taste for poetry? And how have you acquired judgment in music, but by the same application to the subject. How is it possible that men should be well governed, if they are not known, and how can the knowledge of men be acquired, but by living among them? But seeing them in public, where they talk of indifferent subjects, and say nothing that has not been premeditated, is by no means living among them. They must be seen in private, their latent sentiments must be traced to the secret recesses of the heart, they must be viewed in every light, they must be

sounded, and their principles of action ascertained. But to form a right judgment of men, it is principally necessary to know what they ought to be; a clear and definite idea of real merit is absolutely necessary to distinguish those who have it from those who have it not.

"Men are continually talking of virtue and merit, but there are a few who know precisely what is meant by either. They are splendid terms, indeed, but, to the greater part of those who take a pride in perpetually repeating them, of uncertain signification. Justice, reason, and virtue, must be resolved into some certain principles before it can be determined who are just, reasonable, and virtuous. The maxims of a wise and good administration must be known, before those who adopt them can be distinguished from those who substitute false refinement and political cunning in their stead. To take the dimensions of different bodies, we must have a standard measure; to judge of qualities and characters, we must have some fixed and invariable principles to which they may be referred. We must know precisely what is the great purpose of human life, and to what end the government of mankind should be directed. The sole end of all government is to render mankind virtuous and happy; and with this great end, the notion that a prince is invested with the regal power and authority for his own sake, is wholly incompatible. This notion can only gratify the pride of a tyrant; a good king lives but for his people, and sacrifices his own ease and pleasure to their advantage. He whose eye is not invariably fixed upon this great end—the public good, if in any instance he attains it, will attain it by chance; he will float in the stream of time, like a ship in the ocean, without a pilot, the stars unobserved, and the shores unknown. In such a situation, is it possible to avoid shipwreck?

"It frequently happens that princes, not knowing in what virtue consists, know not what they ought to seek in men. They mistake virtue for austerity; it offends them by appearing to want complacency, and to affect independence; and, touched at once with fear and disgust, they turn from it to flattery. From this moment sincerity and virtue are to be found no more; the prince is seduced by a

phantom of false glory, which renders him unworthy of the true. He persuades himself that there is no such thing as virtue upon the earth; for, though the good can distinguish the wicked, the wicked cannot distinguish the good, and what they cannot distinguish they suppose not to exist. They know enough to render them suspicious; but not knowing more, they suspect all alike; they retire from the public eye and immure themselves in the palace; they impute the most casual trifles to craft and design; they are a terror to men, and men a terror to them. They love darkness, and disguise their character, which, however, is perfectly known; for the malignant curiosity of their subjects penetrates every veil, and investigates every secret. But he that is thus known by all, knows nobody. The self-interested who surround him, rejoice to perceive that he is inaccessible. A prince that is inaccessible to men, is inaccessible to truth: those who avail themselves of his blindness, are busy to calumniate or to banish from his presence all who would open his eyes. He lives in a kind of savage and unsocial magnificence, always the dupe of that imposition which he at once dreads and deserves. He that converses only with a small number, almost necessarily adopts their passions and their prejudices, and from passions and prejudices the best are not free. He must also receive his knowledge by report, and therefore lie at the mercy of tale-bearers, a despicable and detestable race, who are nourished by the poison that destroys others; who make what is little great, and what is blameless, criminal; who, rather than not impute evil, invent it; and who, to answer their own purposes, play upon the causeless suspicion and unworthy curiosity of a weak and jealous prince.

"Let the great object of your knowledge, therefore, O my dear Telemachus, be men. Examine them; hear one man's opinion of another; try them by degrees; trust yourself implicity to none. Profit by your experience, when you shall have been deceived in your judgment, which sometimes will certainly happen; for wicked men disguise themselves with too much art to be always detected. Form your opinion of others, therefore, with caution; do not hastily determine either that they are bad or good; for, in

either case, a mistake may be dangerous: thus even from error you will derive wisdom. When you find a man of virtue and abilities, do not use him only, but trust him; for such men like to have others appear sensible of their merit, and set a much higher value upon confidence and esteem than upon pecuniary rewards. But do not endanger their virtue by trusting them with absolute power; for many men who have stood firm against common temptations, have fallen when unlimited authority and boundless wealth have brought their virtue to a severe test. The prince who shall be so far favored of the gods as to find two or three whose wisdom and virtue render worthy of his friendship, will, by their means, find others of the same character to fill the inferior departments of State. Thus, by the few that he can trust, he will acquire the knowledge of others whom his own eye could never reach."

"But I have often heard," said Telemachus, "that men of ability should be employed, even though virtue be wanting." "The service of such men," replied Mentor, "is sometimes necessary. When a nation is in a state of tumult and disorder, authority is often found in the hands of wicked and designing men, who are possessed of important employment, from which they cannot immediately be removed, and have acquired the confidence of persons in power, who must not abruptly be opposed; nor must they be abruptly opposed themselves, lest they should throw all things into irremediable confusion. They must be employed for a time, but care must constantly be taken to lessen their importance by degrees; and even while they are employed, they must not be trusted. He that trusts them with a secret, invests them with power which they will certainly abuse, and of which from that moment he will be the slave. By his secret, as with a chain, he will be led about at pleasure; and, however, he may regret his bondage, he will find it impossible to be free. Let them negotiate superficial affairs, and be treated with attention and kindness; let them be attached to their duty, even by their passions, for by their passions only they can be held; but let them never be admitted to secret and important deliberations. Some spring should be always ready to put them in motion

when it is fit they should act; but a king should never trust them with the key, either of his bosom or his State. When the public commotion subsides, and government is regularly administered by men of approved integrity and wisdom, the wicked, whose services were forced upon their prince for a time, will insensibly become unnecessary and insignificant. But even they should be well treated, for to be ungrateful even to the wicked, is to be like them; but all kindness shown to such characters should be with a view to their amendment. Some of their faults should be overlooked as incident to human infirmity; but the king's authority should be gradually resumed, and those mischiefs prevented, which they would openly perpetrate if not restrained. It must, however, be confessed, that, after all, the necessity of using wicked men as instruments of doing good, is a misfortune; and though it is sometimes inevitable, it should be remedied as soon as possible. A wise prince, who has no wish but to establish order and administer justice, will soon find honest men of sufficient ability to effect his purposes, and be able to shake off the fraudulent and crafty, whose characters disgrace the best service they can perform. But it is not enough for a king to find good subjects; he must make them."

"That," said Telemachus, "must surely be an arduous task." "Not at all," replied Mentor, "the very search after virtue and abilities will produce them, for rewards well bestowed will excite universal emulation. How many languish in idleness and obscurity who would become distinguised, if the hope of fortune were to excite them to labor! How many, despairing to rise by virtue, endeavor to surmount the distresses of poverty by crime! If you distinguish genius and virtue by rewards and honors, your subjects will excel in both characters by a voluntary and vigorous effort of their own; and how much further may you carry this excellence by gradually bringing forward the merit that is thus produced, and advancing those that appear capable of public and important service, from the lowest to the highest employments! You will exercise their various talents, and bring the extent of their understanding and the sincerity of their virtue to the test. Those who

fill the great offices of State, will then have been brought up under your own eye in lower stations. You will have followed them through life, step by step; and you will judge of them, not from their professions, nor from a single act, but from the whole tenor of their conduct."

While Mentor and Telemachus were engaged in this conversation, they perceived a Phæacian vessel which had put into a little island wholly desolate, and surrounded by craggy precipices of an enormous height. It was at this time a dead calm, so that the zephyrs themselves seemed to hold their breath; the whole surface of the sea was bright and smooth as a mirror; the sails which clung to the mast could no longer impel the vessel in its course, and the rowers, exhausted with labor, endeavored to supply the deficiency of the gale in vain. It became, therefore, absolutely necessary to go on shore at this place, which was rather a rock of the sea than a habitation for men. At another time it could not have been approached without the utmost danger.

## LA FONTAINE

JEAN DE LA FONTAINE holds a prominent place among French writers of the seventeenth century. He was born in 1621, at Chateau Thierry, and although he became a man in due course of time, he never grew up. Which is to say that so long as he lived he retained the irresponsibility of childhood. It is said that once, observing a youth of promising parts in the *salon* of a friend, he inquired his name. "What, do you have to be introduced to your own son?" was the astonished retort. La Fontaine was visibly embarrassed but he merely said: "I thought I had seen him somewhere."

He was a child of nature, from first to last. School was irksome to him and he preferred to read as fancy led him. Later, for brief periods he studied law and theology but neither appealed to him. In fact, it was difficult to find anything that would attract him from a lazy, dreamy life until he came upon the poetry of Malherbe, when about twenty-one. At once he became enamoured of poetry and devoted himself to it for the remainder of his life.

His early productions are now valued more for the light they shed on his gradual progress than for any intrinsic value. La Fontaine, intent upon relieving himself of the burden of earning a living, sought the patronage of Fouquet, the great minister, then at the height of his power. An amusing arrangement was made by which, in return for an annuity, he was to compose a given number of odes, ballads and the like for Fouquet, the precise season for the delivery of each being stipulated. When, on one occasion, he received a mild reproof for being short in his yearly poetical output, La Fontaine suggested that if his verse pleased, exact count should not be made; if not, it were best to receive as little as possible.

La Fontaine's father held a position under the government for supervision of streams and forests. This he resigned in order that his son might obtain it. He also married the careless, aimless young man to a sixteen-year old

girl of his acquaintance hoping that family responsibilities would work a change and awaken a sense of duty in his miscreant son. Such a union, viewed indifferently by both contracting parties, could scarcely be expected to prove happy. After ten years La Fontaine quitted his native town for Paris, where his later life was passed. When taken to task too earnestly by his friends for deserting his wife in this way, the delinquent poet would make a brief visit to Chateau Thierry. Once, upon arriving at home, he was told that his wife was at service. Thereupon, he sought out a congenial comrade. Having spent a day or two in agreeable company, in an abstracted mood he noticed the stage about to leave for Paris and took passage in it. When asked regarding his wife, upon his return, he replied that she had been away to benediction.

Regardless of such utter lack of consideration or sense of duty, he was a lovable person, who won his way socially. Someone was always "raised up," like the Judges of Israel, to look after him—to provide him with the needments of life and enable him to pursue his moody, dreamy existence uninterrupted. For some years he was one of the brilliant "Quartette" that met frequently to enjoy one another's society, the others being Racine, Molière and Boileau. It was not unusual for him to remain silent but when roused from his brooding, he became a witty, entertaining conversationalist.

La Fontaine's first fame came as a result of the *Contes*, or Tales, told in verse. These were old stories, related by Boccaccio and by story-tellers without number before him. He set them forth in a spirited manner all his own but provoked the censure of many because of the coarse licentiousness which characterized them. The writer protested that art recognizes no moral limitations, although the concensus of opinion has not been with him in this regard.

A fable may be told in prose or verse; it is a short story that is employed as the vehicle of a truth or moral. Like other of La Fontaine's writings, his fables were done in verse, the style and metre varying according to the character of the narrative.

Fables are almost as old as humanity and especially

those wherein birds or beasts satirize the frailties of man have never lacked for popularity. La Fontaine frankly acknowledged his debt to Æsop in his opening line:

"I sing the heroes of whom Æsop is father."

Phædrus, Bibpai and Lokman have each been credited with the invention of some of our familiar animal fables and the French fabulist used them all as his quarry.

In *The Shepherd and the Lion,* the significance of the fable is hinted:

"Fables are sometimes more than they appear:
A crude, bare moral wearies some, I fear.
The simplest animal to truth may lead;
The story and the precept make one heed;
They pass together better than apart;
To please and yet instruct—that is the art."

La Fontaine belonged to the people and his youth, passed in field and wood, along the streams and in the country, is reflected in his rhymes. It is far-fetched to raise the question whether or not a fox craves cheese, after reading the fable wherein such a habit is implied; no city-bred poet, only one who had seen it growing would be likely to speak of the "crisp dry thyme."

"An amateur of flowers—bourgeois and yet clown—
Had made a garden far from any town;
Neat, trim and snug, it was the village pride;
Green quickest hedges girt its every side;
There the rank sorrel and the lettuce grew;
And Spanish jasmine for his Margot, too,
Jonquils for holidays, and crisp dry thyme;
But all this happiness, one fatal time,
Was marred by a hare; his grief and woe
Compel the peasant to his lord to go."

The French fabulist was one of the few observers of his age who remained unimpressed by the grandeur of the monarch and his elaborate court. Rather, looking at the courtiers, he was reminded of the fox—crafty, subtle, sly.

The woman carrying the golf bag is not a player, but one of the regular caddies of St. Cloud

Two Views of Beautiful Fairways of St. Cloud Golf Course
The site of the course was once the famous forest of St. Cloud. Woe to the golfer who slices or hooks to the dense forest that lines each fairway

The law of the jungle, that might makes right, he saw to be equally binding among nations. If ever cynic had cause to be cynical, surely it was in the age of the great Louis. Note then the fable of "The Fox and the Bust."

"The great too often wear the actor's masque;
The vulgar worshipper the show beguiles;
The ass looks on the surface; 'tis the task
Of the wise Fox to go far deeper; full of wiles,
He pries on every side, and turns and peeps,
And watches—Reynard never sleeps.
And when he finds in many a place
The great man but a pompous face,
Repeats, what once he subtly said
Before a hero's plaster head—
A hollow bust, of mighty size—
Surveying it with scornful eyes,
'Fine head' said he 'but without brains.'
The saying's worth the listener's pains;
To many a lord the *mot* applies."

Twelve books of fables, containing about two hundred and fifty in all, were composed. The first six books, published in 1668, were dedicated to the dauphin, then seven years of age. In the letter written to the child, the author inscribed these lines: "You are at an age when amusement and games are permitted to princes but at the same time you ought to give some of your thoughts to serious reflections. All this is to be found in the fables which we owe to Æsop. I confess that in appearance they are puerile, but the puerilities serve to conceal important truths."[1]

Although generally read by young readers, the fables were not written with them in mind nor would it be possible for children to comprehend the satire that pervades many of them. Yet this is never bitter, like that concealed in Gulliver's Travels. La Fontaine saw life much as it was, his simple mind being not at all misled by golden trappings. The frailties of men amused him and he laughed good humoredly at those who, like "The Mule that boasted of his Family," could not look a little farther ahead.

"A wonderful procession of animals stalks through the fables, almost every kind of zoölogical specimen being rep-

resented. There are rats enough to require the services of many Pied Pipers of Hamelin, lions enough to stock the equatorial forests, wolves enough to make the steppes of Russia seem crowded, bats and birds, gnats and frogs galore, and to each beast, feathered thing, or fish, a place is given in the social scale which he fills with dignity and grace, or in which he acts with wisdom and judgment, or again in which he is made to look ridiculous and become the laughing-stock of those about him."[2]

When over sixty years of age, La Fontaine was received into the French Academy. Many of its members had desired his election at an earlier time but during his last years Louis XIV turned penitent and was pleased to look askance upon La Fontaine for the indecent *Contes,* written long before. After the fabulist had been duly elected and lacked only royal signature to bring him into the erudite fold, the king withheld his sanction until Boileau should be received.

With the flight of three hundred years, initiation into this company of scholars seems less important. The blindness of this select body in the instance of Corneille is sure to come disturbingly to mind, proving how ill-qualified may be the critics of a generation to pass upon their contemporaries. La Fontaine is loved throughout the civilized world for his piquant fables that never grow stale. More gratifying than honors bestowed by the *Academie Française* the fabulist might regard the delicate compliment unconsciously paid him by the wee child of whom Walpole related that, when told to say the pater noster, began:

*"Notre père sur un arbre perché."*

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Quoted by:
[1] Mamel: *Jean de La Fontaine,* 205.
[2] Ibid., 200.

## IV

### The Two Mules

Two mules were journeying—one charged with oats,
The other with a tax's golden fruit.
This last betrayed that manner which denotes
Excessive vanity in man or brute.
Proudly self-conscious of his precious load,
He paced, and loud his harness-bells resounded;
When suddenly upon their lonely road,
Both Mules and masters were by thieves surrounded.
The money-bearer soon was put to death:
"Is this the end that crowns my high career?
Yon drudge," he murmured with his latest breath,
"Escapes unhurt, while I must perish here!"
"My friend," his fellow-traveler made reply,
"Wealth cannot always at the poor man scoff.
If you had been content to do as I,
You'd not at present be so badly off."

## VI

### The Heifer, the She-Goat, and the Lamb, in Partnership with the Lion

The Heifer, Lamb, and Nanny-goat were neighbours,
With a huge Lion living close at hand,
They shared the gains and losses of their labours
(All this was long ago, you understand).
One day a stag was taken as their sport;
The Goat, who snared him, was of course enraptured,
And sent for all the partners of her toil,
In order to divide the treasure captured.
They came. The Lion, counting on his claws,
Quartered the prey, and thus addressed the trio—
"The parts are four. I take the first, because
I am your monarch, and my name is Leo:
Being the strongest, I annex the second;
As bravest, I can claim another share,
Should any touch the fourth, or say I reckoned
Unjustly, I shall kill him. So beware."

## XIV

### Death and the Woodcutter

A poor Woodcutter, covered with his load,
Bent down with boughs and with a weary age,
Groaning and stooping, made his sorrowing stage
To reach his smoky cabin; on the road,
Worn out with toil and pain, he seeks relief
By resting for a while, to brood on grief—
What pleasure has he had since he was born?
In this round world is there one more forlorn?
Sometimes no bread, and never, never rest.
Creditors, soldiers, taxes, children, wife,
The corveé. Such a life!
The picture of a miserable man—look east or west.
He calls on Death—for Death calls everywhere—
Well—Death is there.
He comes without delay,
And asks the groaner if he needs his aid.
"Yes," said the Woodman, "help me in my trade.
Put up these faggots—then you need not stay."

Death is a cure for all, say I,
But do not budge from where you are;
Better to suffer than to die,
Is man's old motto, near and far.

## LXXIII

### Man and the Wooden Idol

A certain Pagan had a god of wood—
Deaf was the idol, yet had ears enough;
The Pagan promised to himself much good.
It cost as much as three men; for his fears
Induced repeated vows and offerings;
Fat oxen crowned with garlands and such things.
Never an idol—think of that—
Boasted of victims half as fat.
Yet all this worship brought no grace,
Treasure or legacy, or luck at play;
What's more, if any single storm came near the place.
This man was sure to have to pay;
Yet all the time the god dined well. Now, was this fair?

At last, impatient at the costly care,
He takes a crowbar, and the Idol smashes
(Crashes).
Forth comes a stream of gold.
"I feasted you with offerings manifold,
And you were never worth an obolus to me;
Now leave," he said, "my hospitality,
Seek out another altar. I hold thee
One of those gross and stupid creatures
With wicked and untoward natures
Whose gratitude can never grow;
But after many a heavy blow,
The more I gave the less I got; I own
It's very well I changed my tone."

## LXXVII

### The Camel and the Drift-Wood

The first who saw a real live Camel
Ran for his life; the second ventured near;
The third, with ready rope, without a fear,
Made a strong halter the wild thing to trammel.
Habit has power to quickly change
Things that at first seem odd and strange;
Stale they grow, and quickly tame,
And hardly seem to be the same.
And since the question's open, once there stood
A look-out watching all the distant flood;
And seeing something far off on the ocean,
Could not conceal his notion
It was a man-of-war; a moment past
It turned a fire ship, all ataut and brave,
Then a big boat, and next a bale, and last
Some mere drift timber jostling on the wave.
How many things watched by the world agree
In this—that far away you see
That there is something, yet when sought,
And seen still nearer, it proves nought.

## XCVI

### The Ass That Carried the Relics

An Ass, with relics loaded, thought the crowd
Knelt down to him, and straightway grew so proud;
He took to his own merit, without qualms,

Even the incense and loud chaunted psalms.
Some one, to undeceive him, wisely said—
"A foolish vanity has turned your head:
They not to you, but to the idol pray;
Where glory's due, there they the honour pay."

When foolish magistrates rule o'er a town,
It's not the man we bow to, but his gown.

## CXIX

### The Dog and the Shadow

We all deceive ourselves, and so we fall;
We all run after shadows, in our way:
So many madmen, one can't count them all;
Send them to Æsop's Dog—I beg and pray.
The Dog, who saw the shadow of the meat
He carried, dark upon the liquid tide,
Dropping his prey, snapped at the counterfeit:
The river rose, and washed him from the side.
True, with much danger, he regained the shore,
But neither meat nor shadow saw he more.

## CLVII

### The Funeral of the Lioness

The Lion lost his wife, one day;
And everybody made his way
To bring the prince that consolation
Which makes us feel our desolation.
The King announced the funeral
On such a day, to one and all.
They regulate the obsequy,
And marshal the vast company:
As you may guess, each one was there;
The prince's groanings filled the air;
And the den shook, above, below—
Lions have got great lungs, you know.
As the King does, all the others do;
So the best courtiers blubbered too.

Let me define a court: a place
Sad—gay; where every changeful face,
Careless of joy, is ready still

To change again at the King's will;
And if some cannot change, they try
To watch the change in the King's eye:
Chameleons, apes, in every feature;
Plastic and pliant in their nature.
One soul by turns fills many bodies:
These knaves are soulless, which more odd is.
But to return. The Stag alone
Uttered no single sigh or groan.
It could not well be otherwise;
This death avenged old injuries.
The Queen had cruel mischief done;
Strangled his wife, and slain his son:
Therefore he shed no single tear.
A flatterer noticed, hovering near;
Moreover, the spy saw him smile.
The anger of a King, meanwhile
(I may observe, with Solomon,
The wisest man beneath the sun),
Is terrible; but to our friend
No book could much instruction lend.
"Base creature of the woods!" with scorn
The Lion cried, "you do not mourn!
What should prevent our sacred claws
Teaching you friendship's holy laws?
Come, Wolves, avenge that Queen of mine:
Offer this victim on her shrine!"
The Stag replied, "The time for grief
Is passed; tears now are useless, Chief.
Your wife, whose features well I know,
Appeared to me an hour ago,
Half hid in flowers. 'My friend,' she said,
'For me your tears are vainly shed.
Weep not: in the Elysian fields
I've every pleasure that life yields,
Conversing with my holy friends;
But for a time the King descends
To a despair that charms me so.'
Scarce had he spoken thus, when, lo!
"A miracle!" the courtiers cry.
The Stag's rewarded, instantly;
And safely, without punishment,
Back to his native woods is sent.

With dreams amuse a listening king,
With falsehoods sweet and flattering;
Whatever rage within may burn,
He'll gorge the bait, and friendly turn.

## CLXXII

### The Oyster and Its Claimants

Two travellers discovered on the beach
An Oyster, carried thither by the sea.
'Twas eyed with equal greediness by each;
Then came the question whose was it to be.
One, stooping down to pounce upon the prize,
Was thrust away before his hand could snatch it.
"Not quite so quickly," his companion cries;
"If *you've* a claim here, *I've* a claim to match it;
The first that saw it has the better right
To its possession; come, you can't deny it."
"Well," said his friend, "my orbs are pretty bright,
And *I*, upon my life, was first to spy it."
"You? Not at all; or, if you *did* perceive it,
"I *smelt* it long before it was in view;
But here's a lawyer coming—let us leave it
To him to arbitrate between the two."
The lawyer listens with a stolid face,
Arrives at his decision in a minute;
And, as the shortest way to end the case,
Opens the shell and eats the fish within it.
The rivals look upon him with dismay—
"This Court," says he, "awards you each a shell;
You've neither of you any costs to pay,
And so be happy. Go in peace. Farewell!"

How often, when causes to trial are brought,
Does the lawyer get pelf and the client get naught!
The former will pocket his fees with a sneer,
While the latter sneaks off with a flea in his ear.

## A GIFTED CORRESPONDENT

FROM the hypocrisies and shams that abounded in the age of Louis XIV, it is a relief to turn to the picture of seventeenth century society which has been preserved to us in the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné—herself a member of one of the oldest families of the French nobility. Most of her letters were addressed to her daughter but among the fifteen hundred which survive, some were written to her cousin Bussey, some to Madame La Fayette, to authors and other people of consequence. The happy style of these epistles has won their author rank with the greatest letter-writers of all time and some go so far as to accord her supreme place.

Marie de Rabutin Chantal was born in Paris in 1626; she died in 1696, retaining her lively interest in family, acquaintances and in general affairs until the end. Left an orphan when very young, she became the ward of an uncle. Being of a scholarly turn of mind, he provided excellent instructors for his niece, who mastered several languages and received a much more liberal education than the majority of girls of her generation.

When eighteen she was married to the Marquis de Sévigné, a Breton noble—handsome, dashing and far too popular socially to expend much attention upon his young wife. His numerous affairs of the heart led her to seek retirement and we can but imagine that when he fell in a duel, his demise must have come more in the nature of a liberation than a sorrow.

Madame de Sévigné was now twenty-five years of age and the mother of two children: a daughter, Françoise-Marguerite, and a son, Charles. Attractive, witty and much sought after, she nevertheless declined all opportunities to marry and devoted herself to her children and friends. An ample income enabled her to live at ease and to keep open house, visit watering places or retire into the country, as she preferred.

Her son inherited his mother's sunny disposition but

the daughter, remarkable for her beauty, was of a cold temperament, governed by her intellect rather than her emotions. Nevertheless, it was to her daughter that Madame de Sévigné's heart went out in the one great passion of her life.

When the girl was eighteen, she was married to Comte de Grignan, already twice a widower. His home was in Provençe, whither she went to live. This separation was a sore cross to the adoring mother, yet to it we owe those wonderful letters which Madame de Sévigné wrote for more than twenty years to her beloved child, relating for her entertainment all the happenings of the capital which would help to enliven the hours for one cut off from its many attractions.

It is difficult for us today to realize how welcome were letters in an age when they supplied one of the few means for obtaining outside news. The *Gazette,* the first newspaper established in France, was founded in 1631 and appeared weekly as a four-page sheet. Forty years passed before a journal known as the *Quarterly* was launched. In order to learn of other places one must needs visit them personally, listen to the reports of those recently returned or be advised by letter. As a consequence, people did not dispatch such hastily composed missives as we frequently impose upon one another. If friends wrote less often, they usually undertook to relate not merely personal concerns but to report as well of whatever might be taking place, of a nature to inform, amuse or divert the absent. It were possible to do all this in a terse, graceless sort of way and it is safe to say that so it was often done. Occasionally, someone possessed of leisure and inclination alike and having withal the facility for narrating even simple occurrences with skill, penned such glowing epistles that, when good fortune has led to their preservation, they provide useful material for reconstructing the social life of the period.

So with Madame de Sévigné. All her letters bespeak her natural ease, social familiarity and worldly wisdom. It was when she addressed her daughter, laying aside all formality, that she gave her pen the reins, in her own phraseology, and wrote as she might have talked. It is a

matter for regret that many of the replies of the Marquise de Grignan have disappeared. Something regarding them may be inferred from remarks made by her mother, and, after all, it is doubtful if this self-absorbed and self-sufficient beauty ever devoted enough time in responding to make her replies so pleasing.

At first sight it would seem that so wholesome a woman whose first thought was her children would arouse only admiration in the students of an age when morals were lax and parents often strangers to their offspring. But, while few may be gifted in the art of letter writing, all may be critics. It has been said that it was absurd for a woman to lavish so much affection upon an ungrateful daughter; that she passed no comment upon the sovereign and his court, merely narrating what concerned them. It is objected that she manifested slight consideration for the unhappy state of the peasants.

Madame de Sévigné wrote for her own pleasure and for the edification of relatives and friends. She was not a reformer and had no theories to advocate. She shared the failings of her class, and a hundred years were still to pass ere the miseries of the peasantry were alleviated. It is because she wrote so well that her letters animate us even yet and call to mind the naïve remark dropped by one of her admirers that, in reading one of these glowing epistles, one can but regret that it leaves one less to be enjoyed.

Her generation is reflected in her letters as in a mirror, and such a presentation has greater value for us now than a personal interpretation of events would be likely to have, since only a philosopher can dispense justice impartially to all.

Amiability, sprightly wit and ease of expression are all excellent in a writer of letters or memoirs, but above these qualities is one wherein Madame de Sévigné surpassed most of her contemporaries—that is, in her candor and truthfulness. At a time when Molière was satirizing the pretenses and double-dealing of an age, this tender mother was penning her radiant descriptions of private and public events to gladden the Marquise de Grignan and friends in remote

Provence. Her loyalty to her associates, especially in days of reverses; her staunch support of Corneille, when popular approval had already swung over to Racine; her ready tact and consideration for others, all commend themselves to the lover of intimate writings.

## LETTERS OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

### XXXIX

To Madame de Grignan

Paris, Monday, Dec. 11, 1673.

I am just returned from St. Germain, where I have been two whole days with Madame de Coulanges at M. de La Rochefoucauld's. In the evening we went to pay our court to the queen, who said a thousand obliging things to me of you; but if I were to enumerate all the how-d'ye-do's and compliments that I had, both from men and women, old and young, who crowd about me to inquire after you, I should have to name the whole court. "And how does Madame de Grignan do? and when will she return?" and so on. In short, only figure me to yourself, in the midst of a crowd of idle people, who, having nothing else to do, every one asked me some question, so that I was frequently obliged to answer twenty at once. I dined with Madame de Louvois; it was who should be the first to invite me. I would have returned yesterday, but we were stopped by force to sup with M. de Marsillac in his enchanted apartments, with Madame de Thianges, Madame Scarron, the duke, M. de La Rochefoucauld, M. de Vivonne, and a band of heavenly music. This morning, with much ado, we got away.

A quarrel of a singular nature is the news of the day at St. Germain. The Chevalier de Vendome and M. de Vivonne are the humble servants of Madame de Ludre. The chevalier expressed a wish of compelling M. de Vivonne to resign his pretensions. "But on what grounds?" he was asked. Why, he would fight M. de Vivonne. They laughed at him. It was however no joke; he said he would fight him. And he mounted his horse, to take the field. But the best of the story was Vivonne's reply to the person who brought him the challenge. He was confined to his room by a wound in his arm, and receiving the condolence of the whole court, ignorant of the threat of his rival. "I, gentlemen," said he, "I fight! He may fight if he pleases, but I defy him to

make me fight. Let him get his shoulder broken, let the surgeon make twenty incisions in his arm, and then"—it was thought he was going to say, *we will fight*—"and then," said he, "perhaps we may be friends. But the man must be jesting to think of firing at me! A pretty project, truly! He might as well fire at the door of a coach house. I repent, however, having saved his life in crossing the Rhine, and will do no more such generous actions till I have the nativity cast of those I intend to assist. Would any one have thought, when I was remounting this fellow on his horse, that a few weeks afterward he would want to shoot me through the head for my kindness?" This speech, from the tone and manner in which it was delivered, had so droll an effect that nothing else is talked of at St. Germain.

I found your Siege of Orange very much magnified at court. The king has spoken of it very agreeably, and it was thought highly honorable to M. de Grignan, that, without the king's order, and merely to follow him, seven hundred gentlemen should have assembled upon the occasion,—for the king having said *seven hundred,* every one else said *seven hundred.* It was added, with a laugh, that two hundred litters also followed him; but it is thought, seriously, that few governors could have obtained such a retinue.

I have had two hours' conversation at two different times with M. de Pomponne. He exceeds my most sanguine hopes. Mademoiselle Lavocat is in our confidence; she is a very amiable girl. She knows all our affairs—the business of the syndic, of the procurator, our gratuity, opposition, deliberation, etc.—as well as she does the map of the empire, and the interest of princes; that is, she has them at her finger's end. We call her the *Little Minister.* We have interludes in our conservations, which M. de Pomponne calls flashes of rhetoric to secure the good humor of the audience.

There are some points in your letters I cannot reply to; we often answer ridiculously when we write from such a distance. You know how grieved we once were at the loss of some town, when they had been rejoicing for ten days at Paris because the Prince of Orange had raised the siege;

but this is one of the evils of distance. Adieu, my beloved child; I embrace you very affectionately.

## LII

### To the Count de Bussy

Paris, Aug. 6, 1675.

I shall say no more of my daughter's departure, though it is a subject upon which I think incessantly. I shall never be able to reconcile myself to the idea of living without her; but I must keep this sorrow to myself.

You ask me where I am, how I am, and in what way I amuse myself. I am at Paris; I am in good health; and I amuse myself with trifles. But this style is laconic; I will be more diffuse. I should now be in Brittany, where I have a thousand affairs to transact, if it were not for the commotions that disturb it. Six thousand men are going thither, commanded by M. de Forbin. The question is, what will be the effect of this chastisement? I wait to know; and if repentance seize the rebels, and they return to their duty, I shall resume the thread of my journey, and spend part of the winter there.

I have had many attacks of the vapors; and the health, which you have formerly seen so robust, has sustained shocks that have humbled me as much as if I had received an insult.

With my mode of life you are sufficiently acquainted. I pass my time with five or six female friends whose society pleases me, and in the performance of a thousand necessary duties, which are no trivial concern. But what vexes me is, that the days pass away even when we do nothing, and that we grow old, and die. I find great fault with this. Life is too short; scarcely is our youth passed before we find ourselves in old age. I could wish to have a hundred years certain, and to leave the rest to chance. Should you not like this, too, my dear cousin? But how is it to be attained? My niece will be of my opinion. If she is happy in her marriage, she will inform us of it; if not, she will be silent upon the subject. Whatever be the event, there is no pleasure, no comfort, no happiness, that I do not wish her in

this change in her situation. I often talk upon the subject with my niece, the nun; she is very agreeable, and her turn of mind often reminds me of you. I cannot pay her a higher compliment.

You are an excellent almanac. You predicted, like one of the trade, all that happened in Germany; but you did not foresee the death of M. de Turenne, nor the cannon ball, shot at random, which singled him out from ten or twelve others. I, who see the hand of Providence in everything, behold this cannon loaded from all eternity. I observe that everything concurred to lead M. de Turenne to the fatal spot, and I do not consider the event so dreadful, supposing him to be in a fit situation to die. What more was necessary? He died in the arms of Glory. His reputation could not be greater; even at the moment of his death he had the pleasure of seeing his enemies retire, and of witnessing the fruit of his conduct for three months. Long life will sometimes obscure the star of fame. It is always safest to cut to the quick, and especially with heroes, whose actions are so scrutinized. If the Count d'Harcourt had died after the taking of the St. Marguerite Islands, or the relief of Casal, and the Marshal du Plessis-Praslin after the battle of Rethel, would they not have been more renowned? M. de Turenne did not feel the pain of death; do you reckon that as nothing? You know the general grief occasioned by his loss, and the creation of eight new marshals of France in consequence of it. . . .

## LXIX

### To Madame de Grignan

Nevers, *Friday, May* 15, 1676.

I am on a route which would tempt me to write to you whether I would or no; you may judge, then, how strong the temptation is to one so inclined to write in any event as I am. The weather is delightful; this violent heat has passed off without a storm. I have no more of those attacks I told you of. The country is very fine, and I find our river Loire as beautiful here as at Orleans; it is a great pleasure to meet with old friends upon the road. I have brought my

large coach with me, so that we are quite at our ease, and enjoy the fine prospects which rise upon us every instant; all that vexes me is, that the roads will be bad in the winter, and that your fatigue upon the way will be as great as ours is small.

We follow close upon the heels of Madame de Montespan, and hear at every place, how she looked, how she ate, how she drank, and how she slept. She is in a calash, with six horses, and has the little Thianges with her; another coach, drawn by the same number of horses, follows with six of her women. She has two sumpters, six mules, and ten or twelve men on horseback, without reckoning her officers; her whole train consists of about five and forty persons. She always finds her chamber and bed ready; she goes to bed immediately on her arrival, and eats heartily. She was here at the castle, where M. de Nevers came to give orders for her reception, but he did not stay to receive her. People came to ask alms of her for the churches and the poor; she gives away a great deal in charity, and with a very good grace. She receives a courier from the army every day; she is now at Bourbon. The Princess de Tarente, who knows all the rest, is to be here in two days, and will inform me; and I shall take care to communicate it to you. Have I told you that that same favorite of the King of Denmark, who was so romantically enamoured of the princess, is in prison, and is to be tried? He had formed a little design, it seems, of dethroning his master and benefactor, and of making himself king. M. de Pomponne spoke of him to me the other day, as of a second Cromwell.

Let me tell you, my child, that I find I shall not be able to live long without paying another visit to your castle, with all its circumstances and dependencies; I cherish this pleasing hope, and wish the prospect of having you with me this winter was a little less distant. To tell you the truth, my longing for this is immoderate; pray measure my feelings by your own and let no impossibility come in to thwart us. Adieu, my dear; I shall certainly write to you from Moulins, where I hope to find the letters you must by this time have sent to Paris. I am in utter ignorance of all kinds of news. I have the war very much at heart, which

is but a bad companion for the waters; but what is to be done, when we have a friend in the army? At that rate, I should not be able to take them till January. I read, while I am in the coach, a little history of the viziers and the intrigues of the seraglio, which is amusing enough; it is a book that is quite in fashion.

Good night, my lovely girl. I salute Grignan, and send a thousand good wishes to La Garde. Tell the latter by what ill luck the wind has blown our guidonage down the stream. You are fortunate in having them both with you.

## LXXIV

### To Madame de Grignan

Langlar, *Monday, June* 15, 1676.
(From the Abbé Bayard's.)

I arrived here on Saturday last, my dear, as I informed you I should. I took medicine yesterday, in order to acquit myself of all the ceremonials of Vichy, as you the other day returned the provincial compliments of your ladies with gilded cardboard headdresses. I am in perfect health; the warm weather will completely restore my hands. I make the yoke they have laid on me as light and easy as possible; I begin to walk later; I resume my usual hour of going to bed, and my morning slumbers, and am no longer the poor, timid creature that I was. However, I manage my little skiff with prudence; and if I should steer wrong, one has only to cry out *rheumatism* to me, and I instantly return to my proper course.

Would to God, my dear, that by the effect of some art, black or white, you could be transported hither for a while. You would be perfectly delighted with the virtues and hospitality of the master of the house, and would admire his courage and perseverance in converting a hideous, desolate mountain into the most beautiful and delicious spot imaginable. I am sure it is a novelty that could not fail of striking you. If this mountain were at Versailles, I do not doubt but there are some who would prize it above all the forced beauties that are there extorted from poor, oppressed Nature, in the short and transitory effects of

numerous fountains. The pipe and tabor call forth the fauns to dance the boree of Auvergne in woods replete with odors, which remind me of yours in Provence; in short, we talk of you here, we drink your health, and I rest my wearied limbs in ease and tranquillity.

On Wednesday I shall be at Moulins, where I shall find a letter from you, without offence to the one I expect after dinner. The people in this neighborhood are more reasonable and more well bred than any I have met with in the other provinces; for they have seen the world, and have not forgotten it. The Abbé Bayard appears to me to be happy, both because he is so, and because he wants to be so. But I, my dear countess, cannot be happy without you; my heart is always agitated with hopes and fears, and with the dreadful apprehension of seeing my days pass away at a distance from you. Time runs and flies swiftly, and I know not how or when I shall overtake you. But I will chase these gloomy reflections, by calling to mind a remark that was made to me in Brittany of the avarice of a certain priest. "Madame," said the person to me, very innocently, "he is a man who eats salt fish all his life, that he may eat fresh fish after he is dead." I thought this a pleasant stroke, and I hourly find it applicable. Certain ties and considerations oblige us to feed upon salt fish all our lives, in the hope of having fresh fish when we are dead.

The swelling of my hands has now disappeared; and as I was always in hope that heat would have the desired effect on them, it determined me to take the journey to Vichy, where the shower bath and sweating have rid me of all future apprehensions of the rheumatism. This is what I aimed at, and which I have been fortunate enough to attain.

I consider myself greatly honored by the praise M. de Grignan bestows upon my letters. I never think them good; but since you both approve them, I ask no more. I thank you for the hope you give me of seeing you this winter; I never more ardently longed to embrace you. I love the Abbé for having written to you in so tender and paternal a style. Must not he, who can with difficulty support my being absent from him for only six weeks, enter deeply into the affliction I feel in passing so much of my life with-

out you, and into the extreme desire that I have to be with you? . . .

## VIII

### To M. de Coulanges

Paris, *Monday, Dec.* 15, 1670.

I am going to tell you a thing the most astonishing, the most surprising, the most marvelous, the most miraculous, the most magnificent, the most confounding, the most unheard-of, the most singular, the most extraordinary, the most incredible, the most unforeseen, the greatest, the least, the rarest, the most common, the most public, the most private till today, the most brilliant, the most enviable,—in short, a thing of which there is but one example in past ages, and that not an exact one neither; a thing which causes the greatest joy to Madame de Rohan and Madame de Hauteruve; a thing, in fine, which is to happen on Sunday next, when those who are present will doubt the evidence of their senses; a thing which, though it is to be done on Sunday, yet perhaps will be unfinished on Monday. I cannot bring myself to tell it you: guess what it is. I give you three times to do it in. What, not a word to throw at a dog? Well, then, I find I must tell you. M. de Lauzun is to be married next Sunday at the Louvre to,—pray, guess to whom! I give you a four times to do it in, I give you six, I give you a hundred. Says Madame de Coulanges, "It is really very hard to guess; perhaps it is Madame de La Valliere." Indeed, Madame, it is not. "It is Mademoiselle de Retz, then." No, nor she either; you are extremely provincial. "Lord, bless me," say you, "what stupid wretches we are! It is Mademoiselle de Colbert all the while." Nay, now you are still farther from the mark. "Why, then it must certainly be Mademoiselle de Créqui." You have it not yet. Well, I find I must tell you at last. He is to be married next Sunday, at the Louvre, with the king's leave, to Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle de—Mademoiselle—guess, pray guess her name; he is to be married to Mademoiselle, the great Mademoiselle; Mademoiselle, daughter to the late Monsieur; Mademoiselle, grand-

daughter of Henry IV; Mademoiselle d'Eu, Mademoiselle de Dombes, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, Mademoiselle d'Orleans; Mademoiselle, the king's cousin-German; Mademoiselle, destined to the throne; Mademoiselle, the only match in France that was worthy of Monsieur. What glorious matter for talk! If you should burst forth like a bedlamite, say we have told you a lie, that it is false, that we are making a jest of you, and that a pretty jest it is without wit or invention—in short, if you abuse us we shall think you quite in the right, for we have done just the same things ourselves. Farewell; you will find by the letters you receive this post whether we tell you truth or not.

## X

### To M. de Coulanges

Paris, *Friday, Dec.* 19, 1670.

What is called falling from the clouds, happened last night at the Tuileries; but I must go farther back. You have already shared in the joy, the transport, the ecstasies, of the princess and her happy lover. It was just as I told you; the affair was made public on Monday. Tuesday was passed in talking, astonishment, and compliments. Wednesday Mademoiselle made a deed of gift to M. de Lauzun, investing him with certain titles, names, and dignities necessary to be inserted in the marriage contract, which was drawn up that day. She gave him then, till she could give him something better, four duchies: the first was the county of Eu, which entitles him to rank as first peer of France; the duchy of Montpensier, which title he bore all that day; the duchy of Saint Fargeau, and the duchy of Chatellerault —the whole valued at twenty-two millions of livres. The contract was then drawn up, and he took the name of Montpensier. Thursday morning, which was yesterday, Mademoiselle was in expectation of the king's signing the contract as he had said he would do; but about seven o'clock in the evening the queen, Monsieur, and several old dotards that were about him had so persuaded his Majesty that his reputation would suffer in this affair, that, sending for Mademoiselle and M. de Lauzun, he announced to them be-

fore the prince, that he forbade them to think any further of this marriage. M. de Lauzun received the prohibition with all the respect, submission, firmness, and, at the same time, despair that could be expected in so great a reverse of fortune. As for Mademoiselle, she gave a loose to her feelings and burst into tears, cries, lamentations, and the most violent expressions of grief; she keeps her bed all day long and takes nothing within her lips but a little broth. What a fine dream is here! What a glorious subject for a tragedy or romance, but especially for talking and reasoning eternally! This is what we do day and night, morning and evening, without end and without intermission; we hope you will do likewise, *E fra tanto vi bacio le mani* ("and with this I kiss your hand").

## FOUNDATION OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY

AFTER Henry IV brought the religious wars to a close, he undertook the construction of a strong centralized government. This policy was adhered to by the ministers of Louis XIII, by Mazarin during the minority of Louis XIV, and by the Sun King himself after he resolved to be his own prime minister. When Richelieu had reduced the kingdom to political unity, he realized the advantage that would result from the attainment of a similar unity of literary interest and aim. It was plain that the glorious deeds of sovereigns and ministers would be short-lived without poets, dramatists and writers to extol them and to add their creative contributions to the splendor of the times. Beyond all political ambitions, Richelieu had a fondness for letters; he employed his leisure moments in writing and was sufficiently a student to know that the renown of ancient rulers was often due to the gifted men whom they had encouraged and pensioned.

It was impossible to develop a great national literature until the French language should be properly formulated and common laws of grammar, rhetoric and literary forms established. Good fortune played into Richelieu's hand in this connection in a wholly unexpected manner.

Pellisson, an early historian of the Academy, has related the origin of that august body as follows: "About the year 1629 some private individuals who lived in different parts of Paris, finding it highly inconvenient in that great town to pay frequent and fruitless visits to one another, determined to meet on one day of the week at the house of one of their number. They were all men of letters, and of a merit much above the ordinary: M. Chapelain, M. Conrart . . . and M. de Malleville. They met at the house of M. Conrart, which was the most convenient for their reception, and was in the heart of the town, all the others living at almost equal distances from it. There they conversed familiarly, just as they would have done on an ordinary visit, about all sorts of things—public affairs, the latest

news, literature. And if any one of the company had written a book, as often happened, he showed it willingly to all the others, and they freely gave their opinions on it. Their discussions were followed sometimes by a walk, sometimes by a meal, of which they partook in common. They went on in this way for three or four years, and, as I have heard several of them say, it was with extreme pleasure and incredible profit. So that when they talk even today of that first age of the Academy, they speak of it as of an age of gold, during which, with all the innocence and all the liberty of the early centuries, without publicity, and without pomp, and without any laws but those of friendship, they tasted together all the sweets and charms of mental intercourse and the life of reason."

Those who thus informally met together by mutual agreement were sworn not to speak of these happy gatherings, so thoroughly enjoyable that new arrivals or innovations were looked upon with deep dismay. However, it was impossible that some good story related here, some new book discussed, some interesting theory advanced, should not be repeated to a friend, first pledged to disclose nothing. After a time, the meetings became an open secret and rumors of them reached the ear of Richelieu, who immediately saw material shaped to his hand. Without delay he sent word to these literary men that they might be placed under royal protection, and letters patent be provided for their formal organization.

The consternation which this message provoked can scarcely be imagined. Some declared that they must promptly refuse all outside interference; however, a moment's reflection showed that to do so would be to incur the undying enmity of Richelieu. Choosing the lesser of two evils, they made civil reply, thanking the minister for his gracious consideration and placing themselves in his hands. The *Parlement* of Paris resented being convoked to issue letters patent for a body of scholars. One of them remarked that it would have been equally appropriate to convene the Roman Senate to decide upon the sauce for an emperor.*

* As was actually done in Domitian's time.

It was conceded that the first task which the French Academy should undertake would be the preparation of a dictionary. This was begun in 1639 and was not finished until the closing years of the century.

Saint-Beuve contends that the French Academy never wholly fulfilled the part which Richelieu conceived for it. The Letters Patent explained the purpose of its establishment: "The hope that our language, more perfect already than any other living language, may succeed to Latin, as Latin did to Greek, if more care be taken than has been hitherto of elocution; which is not, in truth, the whole of eloquence, but a very good and very important part of it." The Academy was "to establish a certain usage of words, and to regulate terms and phrases by an ample dictionary and a precise grammar, which would give to the language a part of the ornaments that it lacked."

It would seem that Richelieu dreamed of a learned body which should standardize literature, if such a thing be conceivable, passing a verdict on important new works as they appeared and supporting high ideals toward which new authors might aspire. In any event, it is certain that it played no such rôle. Throughout, it was highly conservative and it often happened that the most gifted and original writers remained entirely without its sacred precincts.

Of the original membership, which by the laws of 1635 was limited to forty, only four have left an appreciable mark on French literature: Chapelain, remembered for his poetry; Balzac, accomplished letter writer and critic; Voiture and Racan, both versifiers. At one time in the seventeenth century the membership was actually representative of French literary genius, Corneille, Racine, Boileau, Bossuet and La Fontaine all being included on its roster. In the following century Montesquieu and Voltaire were received but neither Rousseau nor Diderot were members.

It was to the lasting regret of the Academy that the greatest comedy writer France has produced was held without the pale. A bust of Molière was set up in the hall of the Academy after his death with an inscription which read: *"Rienne manque a sa gloire, il manquait a la notre"*

("Nothing is lacking to his glory; he was lacking to ours.").

During the troubled times which the French Revolution produced, the Academy was dissolved, in 1793. Napoleon revived it in a measure, although the Institute which he organized is by no means a revival of the original Academy. Today five academies compose the Institute. Many of the foremost writers of the nineteenth century were not included in the Academy of Letters. Balzac, the great French novelist; Gautier, Flaubert, Zola—all men of undoubted genius, were never received. Neither Michelet, the romantic historian, or Thierry, more guarded in statement, were among the chosen; neither Daudet nor Maupassant.

Notwithstanding the failure of each age to discern its truly gifted, it cannot be denied that the French Academy did much to clear the ground for literary development. It was a tremendous advantage to have a dictionary at hand, even though the Romanticists later lamented the exclusion of many a forceful and colorful word which scholars had deemed unworthy of a place in their learned tome. A grammar, prepared by a secretary of the Academy, was received and approved by the body. It has been argued both that the influence of this society was great and that it was small, and when scholars are divided, the laity can but note their differences. It is difficult to appraise justly the influence of any educational movement, since it operates too subtly to admit of recognition. Men of letters are subject to the weaknesses of humanity and their reluctance to receive certain richly endowed writers because of personal habits which were held to be unworthy of members in so exalted a body won the Academy the ridicule of many who attributed their verdicts to less creditable motives. At one time in the eighteenth century members were really appointed in the *salons*, women having opportunity to intercede for their friends.

## RISE OF THE FRENCH SALON

WOMEN exerted little perceptible influence on public affairs in France in the early years of the seventeenth century. The religious struggle had compelled nobles to spend much of their time in military service and the Court of Henry IV was not unlike a general's camp. Coarse speech prevailed among women as well as among men and no distinction was drawn in their presence. The license of the stage made the presence of respectable women undesirable. There was no opportunity for them to have a part in affairs of general concern, for as yet the usual French domicile did not contain reception rooms. There was no place other than bed-chambers for guests to assemble and these were usually dark and poorly furnished. Otherwise there were only the vast halls in castles of royalty or nobility.

It was into such an uncultured atmosphere that an Italian lady came as a bride in the early years of the century. Catherine de Vivonne was scarcely more than twelve years old when she was married to a French diplomat, later known as the Marquis de Rambouillet. Born of an illustrious family, she had been well-educated and when she accompanied her husband to Paris she quickly wearied of the conversation which she heard at the French Court. The manners which she saw in her newly adopted land seemed insupportable when compared with the refined customs of Italy. In 1608 she withdrew from court life and became the center of her own exclusive circle. Presently the Marquis de Rambouillet, whose chief desire was to meet her every wish, carried out her ideas in remodeling their residence in the Rue Saint Thomas du Louvre. Instead of having one great reception hall, she chose to provide a suite of rooms adapted to friendly intercourse. Thus the Hôtel de Rambouillet became the first of those famous *salons* which played so interesting a part in the social and intellectual life of seventeenth and eighteenth century France.

The Marquise de Rambouillet possessed sufficient charm and tact to impress her personal preferences upon those who gained the coveted admission to her circle. Certain innovations were made in her *salon.* Hitherto it had been customary for men to wear their hats when they dined and even in the presence of women. The habit of removing them now arose in deference to her wishes.

In her hospitable home nobles, courtiers and devotees of fashion met on equality aspiring poets and writers. It has been said that at the Hôtel de Rambouillet nobles learned something of letters, while writers learned something of manners. Screens divided rooms, so that small groups might chat in comparative privacy.

At this time France did not possess a standardized language. In conversation a variety of dialects might be heard, while the written language of the age has been termed a "learned jargon." In the circles that convened in this *salon,* groups might be heard discussing the correct pronunciation of words, suitable literary forms, the merit of a newly turned poem, the worth of a popular romance. Nor were literary themes alone discussed. Questions of courtesy and of refinement were brought thither for decision, while public matters were not avoided.

Madame de Rambouillet formed an exclusive circle, but it was not based on birth. Men of ability were welcomed. Corneille, retaining throughout the manner of a provincial, was a frequent guest. Voiture, Chapelain and Bossuet were habitual visitors. Richelieu sometimes appeared. Madame de Sévigné and Madame de La Fayette were often to be found here.

It was inevitable that other *salons* should spring up soon in imitation of this one. The newer ones were visited by gifted writers, but conversation was often more witty and less pedantic than here. The Hôtel de Rambouillet had been designed as a strictly intellectual center, and during the twenty-five years and more wherein the Marquise presided over it, her preferences controlled the company. Being of a scholarly turn of mind, she chose guests to whom scholarly themes appealed.

Other innovations were made by her. It had been cus-

tomary to furnish great reception halls in shades of red or brown; she chose to have her favorite room done in blue. Strong light was distasteful to her and her rooms were bathed in subdued light. Her example led others to carry out individual desires rather than adhere to conventional ways.

A variety of departures were made by women in this century, as they slowly began to shake off disabilities which had retarded them. It was inevitable that some of these should be accompanied with danger. Ninon de L'Enclos, a famous beauty of the time, felt that a double standard of morality operated to the disadvantage of women. She resolved to avail herself of masculine freedom—which, according to the interpretation of the day, meant that she became a courtezan. The number of her conquests was legion. Yet, when passion had exhausted itself, she settled down to conventional life and, curiously enough, in her advanced years it was thought to be highly advantageous that young men obtain their social training in her *salon.*

Among those who worked for the advance of women—perhaps the only one who was consciously striving to that end, for the majority of the *Saloniéres* were absorbed in their own pleasure rather than in any ultimate good which might arise from their activities—was Mademoiselle de Scudéry. She was the author of a type of stories which are no longer either written or read. They were somewhat didactic in purpose and beyond a doubt served their generation well. Under such a pretentious title as *Cyrus the Great,* she depicted persons known to her and made them the mouthpieces for sentiments that she wished to express. Her *Conversations* were prepared to give more definite instruction than the medium of novels permitted. Speaking of *Conversations,* she wrote: "As conversation is the social bond of all men, the greatest pleasure of honorable persons and the usual means of introducing not only politeness into society, but also the purest morality, and a love of fame and virtue, it seems to me that the company cannot more agreeably or more usefully entertain itself than by examining what is called Conversation." She further observed: "The most charming women in society when they

are together in great numbers, without men, seldom say anything that is worth hearing and feel more bored than if they were alone.''*

She struck at the heart of the matter when she touched upon the education of girls, and it is apparent that by bringing it to the fore she played no slight part in its reformation. To be sure, no immediate changes were made in the training of the majority of daughters, for we find Rousseau, a century later, protesting against the methods employed in the education of the young generally. Nevertheless, in view of the tremendous popularity which Mlle. de Scudéry's books enjoyed, it is certain that the meagre schooling which well-born girls received was brought home to many a reader and worked in the long run for betterment.

''Can there be anything more whimsical than the way the education of women is usually carried on?'' she wrote. ''They are taught not to be coquettish or gallant, yet they are permitted to learn carefully all that appertains to gallantry, without allowing them to know anything that might fortify their virtue or occupy their mind. . . . What is singular is that a woman who can dance with propriety only five or six years of her life spends ten or a dozen in continually learning what she can use for only five or six; but this same person is obliged to have judgment till she dies, and to talk to her last breath, yet she is never taught anything to make her speak more agreeably and act with more decorum.''

One who would know more of the *salons* which contributed to the cultivation of the amenities of life and the gentle art of conversation would do well to seek out *Clelie* and other novels by this mingler of romantic and instructive sentiments. Unhappily, when Boileau, the stern critic, sought an example of the sentimental novel, which he heartily decried, he found it in *Le Grand Cyrus* and under his sarcastic pen it and other stories of its kind were doomed to future neglect.

*These and other citations from the writings of Mlle. de Scudéry may be found in Saint-Beuve's *Portraits of the Seventeenth Century.*

## LIBERATION OF THOUGHT

THE financial crisis in France following the death of Louis XV was serious, but under other circumstances it would not have demoralized the government. Revolts had been frequent when Louis XIV had been obliged to raise large sums of money to carry on his wars of aggrandizement and to build the palace at Versailles. He had not hesitated to levy one assessment after another; riots often ensued when the tax gatherers became too insolent, but these had been invariably put down with a heavy hand.

However, the conditions had changed since the dawn of the eighteenth century. A school of writers had grown up which fearlessly attacked problems of government and social organizations. Their doctrines, first known only to the enlightened, had gradually permeated all ranks. The bourgeoisie, made up of the rich merchants, as well as of the people of moderate means, resented more and more the gulf which divided them from the *noblesse,* and even the peasants were no longer the impassively submissive creatures of earlier times. Throughout Europe, the eighteenth century was characterized by advance in the domains of science and natural philosophy. In France it was the science of government and society which attracted the foremost thinkers. Beyond a doubt they were greatly influenced in their endeavors by earlier work which had been done by Hobbes and Locke in England.

Penetrating minds in France began to examine into the affairs of state and to inquire how it had come about that the many were exploited for the advantage of the few. As quickly as the searchlight of scientific investigation was turned upon flagrant abuses, to be found on every side, it was inevitable that a desire to be rid of them should manifest itself. Satire, so incisive and corrective when skillfully employed, was used to depict the foibles and follies of the French, as it had long before served to portray the weaknesses of the ancients. Molière made the stage his arena, pursuing a policy similar to that of Aristophanes in

ancient Athens. Philosophers, on the other hand, exalted reason and proceeded in a calm, argumentative way to explain social problems. They turned to the past to trace the origin of the evils which beset the state.

By one means and another, new conceptions began to take form and, while no clearly defined plans for regeneration were advanced, a general desire for better conditions was felt by the majority of people. So insistent was this attitude that it could no longer be safely ignored or defied.

It is possible to pass in review only the foremost exponents of the new order. Montesquieu adopted the conceit of letters, purporting to be penned by Orientals traveling through Europe to inform friends in Asia of unique customs which they observed in the course of their journeyings. Under the guise of natural curiosity bold comments were made, as, for example, consider a letter written by Rica to Ibben in Smyrna:

"They say that one can never tell the character of the kings of the west until they have passed through the two great ordeals of selecting their mistress and their confessor. . . .

"When I arrived in France, I found the late king altogether governed by women. . . .

"There is not a single person employed in any way at the Court, in Paris, or in the provinces, who is not acquainted with some woman through whose hands pass all the favours and sometimes all the wrongs which he may wish done. These women are all in each other's secrets, and form a sort of republic, the members of which are always busy aiding and serving each other; it is like a state within a state; and any one at Court, in Paris, or in the provinces, who sees the activity of the ministers, the magistrates, and the prelates, if he does not know the women who govern them, is like a man who sees a machine at work but who is ignorant of the springs that move it.

"Do you think, Ibben, that a woman consents to be the mistress of a minister for love of him? What an idea! It is in order that she may lay before him every morning five or six petitions; and the goodness of these women appears in the zeal with which they serve an infinite number of un-

A Street Scene in a Residential Section of Paris

A Daytime View of the Gay Montmartre, Paris

fortunate people, who obtain for them an income of a hundred thousand livres.

"They complain in Persia that the kingdom is governed by two or three women; it is much worse in France, where the women govern generally, and not only usurp all authority wholesale, but retail it among themselves."[1]

Voltaire employed his talents against the Church, which, as then organized, seemed to him responsible for much of the existing oppression. In order to have their way with heretics, the clergy supported the monarch, right or wrong. Learning had been largely in the hands of churchmen, since many of the schools were religious in origin and character, and the instruction provided was designed to hold intact the tenets of Catholicism.

"How easy to hold up to ridicule a bishop who was clamoring for a new dragooning of the Huguenots, when the holy man himself enjoyed all the palaces, valets and love intrigues of a luxurious marquis! The Church was the cornerstone of all the traditionalism, mediævalism, intolerance, and political absolutism as it then existed in France. . . . Therefore Voltaire turned loose his full batteries of ridicule, sarcasm, and direct criticism upon the Church."[2]

In his *Philosophical Dictionary,* Voltaire embodied many ideas which were certain to give men pause—as in his article on "Tolerance," wherein he says: "It is clear that the individual who persecutes a man, his brother, because he is not of the same opinion, is a monster. That admits of no difficulty. But the government! but the magistrates! but the princes! how do they treat those who have another worship than theirs? . . . François I, very Christian, will unite with Mussulmen against Charles V, very Catholic. François I will give money to the Lutherans of Germany to support them in their revolt against the emperor; but, in accordance with custom, he will start by having Lutherans burned at home. For political reasons he pays them in Saxony; for political reasons he burns them in Paris. But what will happen? Persecutions make proselytes? Soon France will be full of new Protestants. At first they will let themselves be hanged; later they in their

turn will hang. There will be civil wars, then will come the St. Bartholomew and this corner of the world will be worse than all that the ancients and moderns have ever told of hell.

"Madmen, who have never been able to give worship to the God who made you! . . . Monsters, who need superstitions as crows' gizzards need carrion! you have been told it already, and there is nothing else to tell you—if you have two religions in your countries, they will cut each other's throats; if you have thirty religions, they will dwell in peace. . . .

"Shall a reed laid low in the mud by the wind say to a fellow reed fallen in the opposite direction: 'Crawl as I crawl, wretch, or I shall petition that you be torn up by the roots and burned?' "

Rousseau became the darling of his age when he wrote the first words of his *Social Contract:* "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains."

It was a favorite thesis in the late seventeenth and in the eighteenth century that, in his primitive state, man had been free; that he had voluntarily surrendered his natural freedom to form society, since further progress had been impossible to him in his isolated state.

"It is true that, in the civil state, he deprives himself of many advantages so great his faculties are trained and developed, his ideas so enlarged, his whole soul exalted to such a degree, that, if the abuses of the new order did not often degrade him below the level of that from which he had escaped, he ought without ceasing to bless the happy moment which tore him forever from the old order, and which, of a stupid and limited animal, made him a reasoning being and a man."

However, Rousseau contended, the contract had been broken. Man's only hope was to return to Nature—to get back into the freedom long ago relinquished in expectation of a more fortunate condition that had failed to materialize.

In the *salons* each new idea found a quick reception. Wig-bedecked courtiers, men of letters, women following in the footsteps of the Marquise de Rambouillet in advancing culture and spreading knowledge, all argued public

questions pro and con. The writings of Voltaire, Rousseau and other of the eighteenth century "philosophers" were eagerly snatched as they came from the press. Often the first issues were confiscated by the French police, but copies reached Holland, there to be reprinted and smuggled back again. The cost of each book being considerable, "lending libraries" arose, where the latest books were available and were let out, not for a few days but merely for a few hours.

The monumental undertaking of the century was the preparation of an encyclopædia which was designed to be a compendium of knowledge. A two-volume work had appeared in England in 1727, known as *Chambers' Cyclopædia,* and it was first planned to issue a translation of it in French. Due to a series of differences and delays, Le Breton, the publisher, approached Diderot with the project of undertaking the work. Diderot was one of the keenest thinkers and most versatile men of his generation and saw at once the possibility of popularizing the new ideas which as yet had gained comparatively few supporters.

Having aroused the publisher to the possibilities of the scheme, Diderot associated various writers with him. D'Alembert undertook the portion of the encyclopædia pertaining to mathematics; Rousseau prepared an article on music; Voltaire, then in Prussia, entered wholeheartedly into the project and wrote several articles which found a place in the work. Other writers, known and unknown, began to contribute such matter as they deemed suitable. Much of it had to be reworked by the tireless Diderot. Montesquieu wrote an essay on *Taste,* and Turgot supplied useful material.

Compendiums of knowledge were by no means new. Pliny had prepared a work of many volumes during the early days of the Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages, Isadore assembled such knowledge as was needed by the general student, for every year the wisdom of the past was being lost, destroyed or shut away where it could no longer be consulted by the young. Roger Bacon began something similar in scope in the thirteenth century. However, the

aim of Diderot was not alone to collect practical information on subjects in alphabetical order, but to make use of carefully prepared material which his work should contain for the purpose of shaping public opinion to accept progressive ideas. Knowing well how difficult it would be to escape the troublesome censors, he was often compelled to disguise the truth; sometimes for the sake of expediency it was necessary to set forth what would be acceptable rather than to write what he would have preferred.

A permit to issue such a work was secured in 1750, and the following year saw the first volume in print. Thenceforward for seven years a new volume was issued annually. Difficulty then arose. Government officials seized the plates and further publication became impossible, even though an advance subscription made it almost imperative to continue. However, the writing went on. D'Alembert became disgusted with the annoyances to which both writers and publishers were subjected and abandoned the cause; but Diderot struggled on. There being none sufficiently acquainted with the processes of handicrafts, manufacturing and the methods employed in factories to prepare data on these subjects, he spent his days working by the side of craftsmen, factory hands and artisans, having looms explained to him, machinery taken apart and assembled for his instruction—all for the purpose of providing accurate material for those who might some day seek such knowledge in the encyclopædia.

Twenty years and more were consumed in this gigantic task, twenty-eight volumes being written, besides additional ones containing charts, indexing and the like.

Diderot's part in this tremendous work was enormous. He wrote, edited, revised, read proof and prepared illustrations. Poorly paid, often with little assistance, he labored on. His fearlessness and that of his associates called forth angry expostulation from the Jesuits, who felt that they should prepare whatever pertained to theology. Diderot was arrested, imprisoned, his plates removed from the printing office and their fate for awhile uncertain; printed volumes were confiscated from subscribers, and in endless ways he was subjected to every conceivable vexa-

tion and trouble. Despite it all, he was able to complete the undertaking.

This famous encyclopædia, were it available in every modern tongue today, would serve small purpose. Such advances have been made in scientific lines that the writings of Diderot and his compeers would be hopelessly antiquated. Education and further discovery have rendered valueless much that found place in the numerous volumes issued between 1751 and 1772. However, the influence exerted by the work in the eighteenth century was far-reaching. It was only when the subscription list reached four thousand that the Jesuits took steps to have the printing stopped; they knew that every copy would be consulted by several readers.

The articles were prepared in the cold light of reason. Two or three illustrations will serve to demonstrate the way dissatisfaction with existing conditions was awakened. Under "Privilege" an iniquitous custom was cited as follows:

"A bourgeois in comfortable circumstances, and who could himself pay half of the *taille* of a whole parish, if it were imposed in its due proportion—on payment of the amount of his taxes for one or for two years, and often for less, without birth, education or talents, buys a place in a local salt office, or some useless charge at court, or in the household of some prince. . . . This man proceeds to enjoy in the public eye all the exemptions possessed by the nobility and the high magistracy. . . . From such an abuse of privileges spring two very considerable evils: the poorer part of the citizens are always burdened beyond their strength, though they are the most useful to the state, since this class is composed of those who cultivate the land, and procure a subsistence for the upper classes; the other evil is that privileges disgust persons of education and talent with the idea of entering the magistracy or other professions demanding labour and application, and lead them to prefer small posts and paltry offices."[3]

In discussing the *taille,* the direct property tax, the article stated that "persons who have changed domicile are still taxed for a certain time in the seat of their former

abode, namely, farmers and laborers for one year, and all other tax-payers for two years, provided the parish to which they have removed is within the same district; and if otherwise, then farmers to pay for two years and other persons for three years." Morley, who quotes this provision, added by way of comment: "Thus a man under the given circumstances would have to pay double taxes for three years as a penalty for changing his dwelling."

The articles were unimpassioned, logical, penetrating and convincing. Often the frank statement of a law was enough to condemn it. To be sure, three-quarters of all the articles pertained to non-argumentative matters and were designed simply to impart information to those in quest of it. It was the other quarter, however, that was productive of greatest results, helping to bring into disrepute wornout theories and remnants of mediævalism.

"In saying that the Encyclopædists began a political work, what is meant is that they drew into the light of new ideas, groups of institutions, usages, and arrangements which affected the real well-being and happiness of France, as closely as nutrition affected the health and strength of an individual Frenchman. It was the Encyclopædists who first stirred opinion in France against the iniquities of colonial tyranny and the abominations of the slave trade. They demonstrated the folly and wastefulness and cruelty of a fiscal system that was eating the life out of the land. They protested in season and out of season against the arrangements which made the administration of justice a matter of sale and purchase. They lifted up a strong voice against the atrocious barbarities of an antiquated penal code. It was this band of writers, organized by a harassed man of letters, and not the nobles swarming round Louis XV, nor the churchmen singing masses, who first grasped the great principle of modern society, the honor that is due to productive industry. They were vehement for the glories of peace and passionate against the brazen glories of war."[4]

It was impossible for the old restrictions, exactions and customs to continue to hold a people bound when writings such as these were being widely read and discussed. It had been taken for granted for generations that the major-

ity must toil in order that the rest might enjoy the better things of life. Now a new gospel was abroad in the land: that it was man's inherent right to live under tolerable conditions and to share the advantages of an impartial government. Once voiced, such sentiments penetrated to the utmost parts of the realm on the wings of the breeze and carried a ray of hope to the peasant, who, while he comprehended them only in part, yet grasped the fact that, since his condition could not be worse, change must tend to alleviate his deplorable predicament.

In reviewing the spirited social and political drama that was soon to be enacted upon the stage of France and re-echo throughout Europe, it should never be forgotten that phrases such as the "rights of man," "fraternity and equality" and the "reign of reason" had been made already familiar by the philosophical writers of the half century preceding.

[1] *Persian Letters*, CIX.
[2] Davis: *History of France*, 225.
[3] Morley: *Diderot*, 188.
[4] Ibid., 184.

## MONTESQUIEU

BOOKS, reflecting their creators, emanate ordinarily either from head or heart; rarely are the emotions and intellect equipoised. In the writings of Francis Bacon, Montaigne and particularly in those of Montesquieu, despite a pervading generosity, philosophical rather than spontaneous, we are forever conscious of mind unhampered by emotion. And what brilliant minds are those of this select group of essayists! We seek them out for entertainment, stimulation and for their revivifying qualities that exhilarate thought. One would not turn to them for consolation and comfort; theirs is the purely intellectual appeal.

Charles Louis de Secondat, known in early life as the Baron de La Brède, from the estate which his mother brought as dowry to his father, was born near Bordeaux in January, 1689. His family had been ennobled in the fourteenth century and for generations his forebears had followed the legal profession, for which he himself was trained. While yet in his twenties he became president of the municipal court of Bordeaux, in which capacity he served for twelve years; thereafter he abandoned the practice of law to pursue letters.

Like most of the marriages of the age, his was merely one of convenience. It was necessary to have heirs to perpetuate families and there is nothing to indicate that his wife, who seems to have been a person of mediocre parts, was ever regarded other than as the mother of his children, a son and daughter for whom he manifested affection.

Throughout his life, Montesquieu was absorbed in study and observation. His fondness for study is attested in his well-known lines: "Study has been to me a sovereign remedy against the vexations of life, having never had an annoyance that one hour's reading did not dissipate." His alertness in observation is attested by every page of his books.

An uncle made him his sole heir on condition that he

adopt the name *Montesquieu,* which he employed henceforth. His income, after receiving this bequest in 1717, enabled him to live abroad and travel at will.

Although lesser writings survive, his fame rests upon three works; of these the *Persian Letters,* by which alone he is known to the generality of readers, was published earliest. The book was in preparation for at least ten years, having been begun before Montesquieu left college. Like Voltaire, he saw the shams and hypocrisies of his age; being of gentle birth and restrained by moderation, he hoped to remedy abuses by placing them poignantly before men in amusing satire. At no time did he desire to overthrow the social system but rather to improve it.

There was much to provoke cynicism in the latter years of the reign of Louis XIV and during the regency. The old king's assumed piety in the closing decade of his life had made it necessary for courtiers to veil flagrant laxities, which were afterwards flaunted openly during the administration of the profligate regent and the grossly immoral Louis XV. The *Persian Letters* were at first printed anonymously, although the true author did not long remain a mystery. Montesquieu realized that in order to gain a hearing for his serious thoughts he must whet the curiosity of his contemporaries by giving them an attractive setting; so he adopted the scheme of representing three Persians, purporting to be touring Europe, supplying information and diversion to friends at home by recounting, in an extended correspondence, the strange customs which they found in other lands—especially in France. To give the whole a sustained interest, he included letters that passed between one of the travellers and his Persian harem, most of them written by or addressed to the Chief Eunuch. It is safe to say that this portion of the volume is today enjoyed least. Under the camouflage of ignorance and naïveté on the part of the foreigner, Montesquieu was able to express his personal views and to expose glaring abuses to such ridicule that they could not fail to win attention. As it was, the Church denounced the book and certain sentences had to be modified before the writer could be received

into the French Academy. A special issue to meet such scruples seems to have been printed.

Rica, one of the Persian tourists, becomes the mouthpiece for the author's lighter sentiments and keen sarcasm; he is sure to discover underlying weaknesses and to pierce them with the lance of naïve innocence. Usbek, his companion, voices deeper thoughts and ponderings. A few sentences indicate the penetration of the writer, whose astuteness missed nothing of the despotism of the Sun King.

"The king of France is the most powerful of European potentates. He has no mines of gold, like his neighbor, the king of Spain; but he is much wealthier than that prince, because his riches are drawn from a more inexhaustible source, the vanity of his subjects. He has undertaken and carried on great wars, without any other supplies than those derived from the sale of titles of honor; and it is by a prodigy of human pride that his troops are paid, his towns fortified, and his fleets equipped.

"Then again, the king is a great magician, for his dominion extends to the minds of his subjects; he makes them think what he wishes. If he has only a million crowns in his exchequer, and has need of two million, he has only to persuade them that one crown is worth two, and they believe it. If he has a costly war on hand and is short of money, he simply suggests to his subjects that a piece of paper is coin of the realm, and they are straightway convinced of it. He has even succeeded in persuading them that his touch is a sovereign cure for all sorts of diseases, so great is the power and influence he has over their minds."[1]

Usbek, in a more thoughtful mood, confides to Rhedi his observations concerning religious agitation in France. "I meet here certain people who are never done discussing religion, but who seem at the same time to contend as to who shall observe it least." And again: "Religion is not so much a matter of holiness as it is the subject of a debate, in which everybody has a right to join. Courtiers, warriors, women even, array themselves against the ecclesiastics, and insist upon their proving what they have made up their minds not to believe. . . . One of them once said

to me: 'I believe in the immortality of the soul for six months at a time; my opinions depend entirely upon my bodily condition.' "[2]

Although the *Persian Letters* are better known today, the *Spirit of Law* was Montesquieu's most pretentious work. It was published in 1748 and had been for two decades in the making. Originally conceived as a portion of it, although published separately, in 1734, were his *Considerations on the Grandeur and Decline of the Romans.*

From childhood Montesquieu was a devoted student of the classics, admiring certain of the attributes of the ancient Romans so much that he made them his own. Forever searching for principles and underlying causes, he attributed the remarkable achievements of the Romans to their fidelity to laws which long governed them and accounted for their decline by their ultimate abandonment of these laws.

He spent some time in England, the friend and companion of Lord Chesterfield who accompanied him on some of his continental tours. He desired to see various kinds of governments in operation and was a great admirer of the English government, which he described in his book with enthusiasm, apparently unaware that in so doing he was undermining French despotism. Indeed, the indifference with which his writings have been regarded in modern times in France has been explained in part by his avowedly pro-English attitude.

A clearer comprehension of political science has since rendered many of Montesquieu's conclusions obsolete but his lucid mental processes and astute observations remain unimpaired. His masterpiece consists of thirty-one books, treating of laws in general, forms of government, manners and customs, religion, economy and the inheritance laws of Romans, Franks and feudalism. He injured his eyesight by prodigious reading and was compelled to complete the work through the agency of a secretary. This accounts, in some measure, for the short paragraphs, broken thought and choppy style which detract from it.

Many a sentence of Montesquieu lingers in memory for its terse simplicity and truth. "It seems to me that until

a man has read all the old books, he has no reason to prefer the new." "Truth seems sometimes as though it ran to meet those who seek it; often there is no interval between desire, hope and enjoyment."

In respect to his century, his importance lay in the fact that his was the first pen to treat of political science; then too, he mirrored with inimitable skill the existing social conditions, accounts of which had to be exaggerated before adjustments would be forthcoming. On the one hand, churchmen regarded Montesquieu's views as pernicious and put them under the ban—although this does not seem to have made very much difference, since they went through several editions in a short time. On the other hand, the radicals of Revolutionary days deemed him far too conservative and placed him among the adherents of the old régime, tearing his remains from the tomb, and casting them out with those of tyrants and oppressors. It was long supposed that his minor writings and notes had been destroyed to prevent them from falling into the hands of spies; however, in recent years these have been brought forth from their place of long concealment.

Montesquieu was of a retiring, modest nature, seldom doing himself justice in conversation save among intimates. He refused a pension offered him by the king, preferring to preserve his independence. He frequented the *salons,* proving a good listener and often remaining silent. When he joined in the discussion his remarks were characteristically clear and convincing.

In lines which Usbek addresses to Rhedi it is assumed that the writer had himself in mind: "Although I am not employed on any business of importance, I am yet constantly occupied; I spend my time observing, and at night I write down what I have noticed, what I have seen, what I have heard during the day. I am interested in everything, astonished at everything; I am like a child, whose organs still over-sensitive, are vividly impressed by the merest trifles."[3]

It is to these discerning observers, who seem to retain something of the pristine world in their power to view life clearly, that we turn for piquant comments and criticisms

whereby we may reconstruct their day and generation; and when by such means the past is again unfolded for our view, we discover the same follies and foibles, the same propensities and perversities that remain "yesterday, today and forever" characteristic of human kind, albeit the social avalanche which Montesquieu unconsciously helped to precipitate dealt a death blow to despotic kings.

[1] *Persian Letters,* XXIV.
[2] Ibid., LXXV.
[3] Ibid., XLVIII.

## From PERSIAN LETTERS

By Montesquieu

### Letter XXXVII

*Usbak to Ibben, at Smyrna*

The King of France is old. We have no examples in our histories of such a long reign as his. It is said that he possesses in a very high degree the faculty of making himself obeyed; he governs with equal ability his family, his court, and his kingdom; he has often been heard to say, that, of all existing governments, that of the Turks, or that of our august sultan, pleased him best; such is his high opinion of oriental statecraft.

I have studied his character, and I have found certain contradictions which I cannot reconcile. For example, he has a minister who is only eighteen years old and a mistress who is fourscore; he loves his religion, and yet he cannot abide those who assert that it ought to be strictly observed; although he flies from the noise of cities, and is inclined to be reticent, from morning till night, he is engaged in getting himself talked about; he is fond of trophies and victories, but he has as great a dread of seeing a good general at the head of his own troops, as at the head of an army of his enemies. It has never, I believe, happened to any one but himself, to be burdened with more wealth than even a prince could hope for, and yet at the same time steeped in such poverty as a private person could ill brook.

He delights to reward those who serve him; but he pays as liberally the assiduous indolence of his courtiers, as the labors in the field of his captains; often the man who undresses him, or who hands him his serviette at table, is preferred before him who has taken cities and gained battles; he does not believe that the greatness of a monarch is compatible with restriction in the distribution of favours; and, without examining into the merit of a man, he will heap benefits upon him, believing that his selection makes the recipient worthy; accordingly, he has been known to

bestow a small pension upon a man who had run off two leagues from the enemy, and a good government on another who had gone four.

Above all, he is magnificent in his buildings; there are more statues in his palace gardens than there are citizens in a large town. His bodyguard is as strong as that of the prince before whom all the thrones of the earth tremble; his armies are as numerous, his resources as great, and his finances as inexhaustible.

Paris, the 7th of the moon of Maharram, 1713.

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## Letter L

*Rica to* * * *

I have met some people to whom virtue was so natural, that they were not even conscious of it; they applied themselves to their duty without any compulsion, and were led to it instinctively; far from making their own admirable qualities a subject of conversation, it seemed as if they were quite ignorant of their existence. Such people I love; not those men who seem to be astonished at their own virtue, and who look upon a good deed as a marvel the relation of which should excite wonder.

If modesty is a necessary virtue in those to whom heaven has given great talents, what is to be said of those insects who dare to exhibit a pride which would dishonour the greatest men?

On every hand I meet people who talk constantly about themselves; their conversation is a mirror which reflects only their own impertinent faces; they will tell you of the merest trifles that happen to them, and expect the interest they take in them to magnify their importance in your eyes; they have done everything, seen everything, said everything, thought everything; they are a pattern to all mankind, a subject of inexhaustible comparisons, a source of precedents which never dries up. Oh! how insipid is self-praise!

Some days ago a man of this type worried us for two hours, about himself, his worth, his talents; but, since there

is no such thing as perpetual motion, he had to cease. It was then our turn to talk, and we took it.

A man, who seemed sufficiently splenetic, commenced to grumble at the tediousness of conversation. "What! are there none but fools, who describe their own character, and bring everything home to themselves?" "You are right," replied our tattling friend abruptly. "Nobody does as I do; I never praise myself; I have means, am well-born, spend freely, and my friends say that I have some wit; but I never talk of all that; if I have any good qualities, that which I set most store by, is my modesty."

I wondered at this malapert; and while he was talking very loud, I whispered, "Happy is he who has enough of vanity never to boast of his own qualities, who dreads the ridicule of his audience, and never hurts the pride of others by exalting himself!"

Paris, the 20th of the moon of Rhamazan, 1713.

## Letter LVIII

*Rica to Rhedi, at Venice*

My dear Rhedi, there are in Paris a great many trades. Some good-natured creature will offer you for a little money the secret of making gold. Another promises you the love of the spirits of the air, if you will see no women for a small trifle of thirty years.

Then you will meet the wizards so skilful, that they can tell you all your life, with the simple proviso of a quarter of an hour's conversation with your servants.

Adroit women turn virginity into a flower, which withers and blooms again every day, and is gathered for the hundredth time with more anguish than the first.

There are other women as skilful, who, repairing by the force of their art all the ravages of time, know how to restore to a face beauty enough to strike one blind, and even to summon a woman from the very end of life's journey back to its tender youthful opening.

All these people live, or seek a livelihood, in this great city, the mother of invention.

The incomes of the citizens cannot be farmed; they con-

sist only in skill and industry; each has his own, and makes the best of it.

He who would wish to count the dervishes who run after the revenue of some mosque, might as well attempt to number the sands of the sea, or the slaves of our monarch.

An infinite number of professors of languages, of arts, and of sciences, teach what they do not know; and their talent is not by any means despicable; for much less wit is required to exhibit one's knowledge, than to teach what one knows nothing of.

One cannot die here, except suddenly; death is left no other method of exercising his power; because, in every hole and corner, people are ready with infallible cures for every imaginable disease.

All the shops are hung with invisible nets, in which the customers are snared. Sometimes, however, one gets off with a good bargain. A shopgirl will wheedle a man for a stricken hour, and all to make him buy a packet of toothpicks.

Every one who goes from this city, leaves it a warier man than when he entered; by dint of throwing away his means on others, he learns how to keep it to himself—the only benefit a stranger carries away from this sorceress of a city.

Paris, the 10th of the moon of Saphar, 1714.

## Letter LXXXVIII

*Rica to* * * *

Man, they say, is a social animal. In this matter a Frenchman appears to me to be more of a man than any other; he is the man *par excellence,* for he seems to be intended solely for society.

But I have noticed among them some who are not only sociable, but are themselves society itself. They multiply themselves at every corner; they people in an instant the four quarters of a city; a hundred such men make more appearance than two thousand citizens; a stranger would think that they might repair the ravages of plague and

famine. It is debated in the schools whether a body can be in more than one place at once; they are a proof of that which philosophers call in question.

They are always in a hurry, because they are engaged in the important business of asking every one they meet whither they are going, and whence they come.

It can never be driven out of their heads that it is a part of good breeding to visit the public every day individually, without counting the wholesale visits which they make to places of general resort, which being much too brief a method, is reckoned as nothing in the rules of their etiquette.

Their knocking harasses the doors of the houses more than the winds and the storms. If one were to examine the lists of all the porters, their names would be found daily mutilated in a thousand different ways in Swiss writing. They pass their lives in going to funerals, in expressions of condolence, or in marriage congratulations. The king never confers a favour on any of his subjects, without putting these gentry to the expense of a carriage to go and express their delight. At last, tired out, they return home, and rest themselves to be able to resume next day their laborious functions.

The other day one of them died of weariness; and they put this epitaph on his tomb: "Here rests one who never rested before. He assisted at five hundred and thirty funerals. He made merry at the births of two thousand six hundred and eighty children. He wished his friends joy, always varying the phrase, upon pensions amounting to two million six hundred thousand livres; in town he walked nine thousand six hundred furlongs, in the country thirty-six furlongs. His conversation was pleasing; he had a ready-made stock of three hundred and sixty-five stories; he was acquainted also from his youth with a hundred and eighteen apophthegms derived from the ancients, which he employed on special occasions. He died at last in the sixtieth year of his age. I say no more, stranger; for how could I ever have done telling you all that he did and all that he saw?"

Paris, the 3rd of the second moon of Gemmadi, 1715.

## Letter CX

*Rica to * * **

The University of Paris is the first-born daughter of the kings of France, and very aged; for she is more than nine hundred years old; and so she dotes now and again.

I have been told that she had at one time a great dispute with some doctors about the letter Q which they wanted to pronounce like K. The quarrel grew so warm that some of the disputants were despoiled of their substance. It became necessary for parliament to put an end to it; which it did by permitting, in a solemn decree, all the subjects of the king of France to pronounce that letter according to their fancy. It was very amusing to see the two most venerable institutions in Europe occupied in deciding the fate of a letter of the alphabet!

It seems, my dear * * *, that the ablest men grow stupid when they get together; and that, where you have the greatest number of wise men, there you have the least wisdom. Great bodies always pay so much attention to minor details, and idle customs, that essentials are never considered till afterwards. I have heard it said that a king of Aragon, having assembled the states of Aragon and Catalonia, the first sessions were spent in deciding in what language the deliberations should be held: the dispute was lively, and the states would have broken up a thousand times, if they had not hit upon the expedient of putting the question in the Catalonian tongue, and the reply in that of Aragon.

Paris, the 25th of the moon of Zilhage, 1718.

## Letter CXLIV

*Usbek to Rica*

Some days ago I met in a country-house which I was visiting, two learned men who have a great reputation here. Their characters astonished me. The conversation of the first, justly estimated, reduced itself to this: "What I have said is true, because I have said it." The conversation of the second went the other way about: "What I have not said is not true, because I have not said it."

I liked the first pretty well; for it is not of the least consequence to me, however stiff in opinion a man may be; but I cannot endure impertinence. The first defends his opinions; that is to say, his own property; the second attacks the opinions of others; that is to say, the property of the whole world.

Oh, my dear Rica, how badly vanity serves those who have a larger share of it than is necessary for self-preservation! Such people wish to be admired by dint of offending. They wish to be superior, but they do not even attain to mediocrity.

Come hither to me, modest men, that I may embrace you! You are the charm, the delight of life. You think that you are nobodies; but I tell you that you possess the one thing needful. You think that no one is humiliated by you, and you humiliate the whole world. And when I compare you in my mind with those imperious people whom I see everywhere, I drag them from their judgment-seat, and throw them at your feet.

Paris, the 22nd of the moon of Chahban, 1720.

## Letter CXLII

*Rica to Usbek, at ****

Here is a letter which I received yesterday from a learned man; you will think it remarkable:

"Sir,—Six months ago I inherited from a very rich uncle five or six thousand livres and a magnificently furnished mansion. It is delightful to have wealth, when one knows how to make a good use of it. I have no ambition, nor any taste for pleasure; I am almost always shut up in a little room, where I lead the life of a savant. It is in such a place that the diligent antiquary is to be found.

"When my uncle died, I was very anxious to have him buried with the ceremonies observed by the ancient Greeks and Romans: but at that time I had neither lachrymatories, nor urns, nor antique lamps.

"Since then, however, I have provided myself with these precious rarities. Some days ago I sold my silver plate in order to buy an earthenware lamp which had given light to

a Stoic philosopher. I have disposed of all the walls of his rooms, that I might possess a little mirror, somewhat cracked, which had formerly been used by Virgil: it charms me to see my own features where those of the swan of Mantua have been reflected. That is not all: I have bought for a hundred louis-d'or five or six pieces of copper money which were current two thousand years ago. I do not think I have now in my house a single piece of furniture which was not made before the fall of the Roman empire. I have a cupboard full of the most valuable and costly manuscripts. Although it is ruining my sight, I much prefer to read them than printed copies, which are not so correct, and which are in everybody's hands. Although I hardly ever go out, that does not prevent me from having an ungovernable passion to be acquainted with all the old roads which date from the time of the Romans. There is one near my house which was made by a proconsul of Gaul about twelve hundred years ago. When I go to my place in the country, I never fail to take it, although it is very inconvenient, and leads me more than a league out of my way: but what really angers me are the wooden posts stuck up at certain intervals to indicate the distances of the neighboring towns. I am in despair at the sight of these signposts, wretched substitutes for the military columns that stood there formerly: I have no doubt that I shall cause them to be set up again by my heirs, and that I shall be able to leave a will compelling them to do it. If, sir, you have such a thing as a Persian manuscript, you would oblige me very much by letting me have it: I will pay you your own price, and will give you into the bargain some works of mine, from which you will see that I am not a useless member of the republic of letters. Among them you will notice a dissertation in which I prove that the crown used formerly in triumphs, was of oak and not of laurel: you will admire another in which I show clearly, by learned conjectures deduced from the weightiest Greek authors, that Cambyses was wounded, not in the right leg, but in the left; in another I demonstrate that a low forehead was a beauty much in request among the Romans. I will send you also a quarto volume, containing the explanation of a

line in the sixth book of Virgil's Æneid. All these things you will receive in a few days; and in the meantime I content myself with sending you the accompanying fragment of an ancient Greek mythologist, which has not yet been published, and which I discovered in the dust of a library. I must leave you now for an important matter which I have in hand, namely, the restoration of a beautiful passage in Pliny, the naturalist, which has been strangely disfigured by the coypists of the fifth century. I am," etc.

## VOLTAIRE

"HE gave the human mind a great impetus; he prepared us for freedom."

The greatest name in the literary world of the eighteenth century is that of Voltaire, regardless of nation or boundary line. Thoroughly French, his interests were cosmopolitan. Three impressionable years were spent in England and, after an extended sojourn in Germany, he passed his later life in Switzerland. For seventeen years Frederick the Great labored to make him an appendage of his court. Empress Catherine of Russia frequently voiced her indebtedness to him for her appreciation of letters. Probably half the writers of Europe for a hundred years were influenced more or less by him and in certain respects civilization itself bears the stamp of his incomparable genius. A late biographer has aptly observed: "There are twenty aspects of Voltaire, any one of which would provide a specialist with material for a volume."[1] Thus it is apparent that in a brief discussion of his restless life and amazing genius it is possible only to outline the one and touch upon the other in the most fragmentary way.

In November, 1694, a frail, sickly babe was born in Paris, whose nurse, more impulsive than discreet, appeared daily at intervals to inform the family that he could not possibly survive. He was buried in 1778, having spanned the long period including the last twenty years of Louis XIV's reign, the regency, and the major portion of the reign of Louis XV, dying only a decade before the outbreak of that great revolution which he had done so much to precipitate. Few of his years were free from physical suffering and often he was racked by pain; yet in his puny body dwelt the mind of a genius propelled by an indomitable will. Even when in the throes of suffering he ordinarily dictated to his secretary and when free from the ills which beset him, worked relentlessly. He attributed his longevity to his temperate eating and to the stern discipline of work which he had imposed upon himself throughout life.

His grandfather had been a successful linen merchant and his father, Armand Arouet, was a substantial notary. François was youngest of his children, some of whom died in infancy. There was a daughter of nine, named Catherine, and a son, Armand, a year or two older. When François was seven his mother died, which probably accounts for the fact that her distinguished son rarely mentioned her. His elder brother, Armand, became a strict Jansenist, affecting all the narrow zeal and fervor which characterized ardent adherents of this Puritanic sect. In view of the iconoclastic tendencies of François, it is evident that there could be no sympathy between the boys, even in their teens.

François was sent to a Jesuit school where he received a good education and throughout life he retained a warm affection for his teachers. At the age of sixteen his father desired him to take up the study of law but the youth had already gained some notoriety for his ability to turn a clever epigram and was resolved to devote his life to letters. This precipitated what one writer has termed "the usual parental war." All cultured people wrote verses or coined epigrams; to the prudent Arouet it seemed absurd for his son to brush aside the surety of the legal profession for a literary career when father and grandfather offered him such undeniable examples of thrift and industry. François was bundled off to Holland in the train of an ambassador, where, it was hoped, he would come to his senses. On the contrary, he merely developed a very youthful infatuation for one Pimpette, whose mother scouted the girl's interest in a page; thereupon he was sent home, to the increased anger of his parent. It happened luckily that a scholarly noble, one Monsieur de Caumartin, now took the young man to his castle near Fontainebleau where he entertained him with stories of Henry of Navarre and with incidents that had occurred under his own observation at the Court of Louis XIV. Out of these charming conversations came the conception of *La Henriade* and *Siècle de Louis XIV,* written later.

Young Arouet had established the reputation for penning risque verses. After the establishment of the regency,

there appeared daring lines calculated to point out the inglorious side of French administration.

*I Have Seen*

"I have seen . . . the prisons full;
I have seen . . . peasants groaning;
I have seen . . . Port Royal destroyed—"

Since Arouet might have written them, despite his protests of innocence, he was clapped safely within the Bastille, where, as a matter of fact, political prisoners fared rather well save that they lacked the inestimable boon of liberty.

It was now that the young poet of doubtful verses adopted the pen name by which he is universally known today—*Voltaire*. Its origin has been a matter of dispute, but since it has been discovered that his mother had relatives by that name, it is now assumed to have been adopted merely from fancy.

Voltaire had already composed his first tragedy, *Oedipe* and was released after several impatient months in the Bastille to attend to the staging of it. It had a run of forty-five nights and was regarded as highly successful; its gibes at the clergy and at despotism were not lost, either upon the authorities or upon free thinkers.

Voltaire doubtless carried himself with enough assurance to incur the wrath of the more firmly established social element. In any event, he was insulted by the Chevalier de Rohan, who set his lackeys to beating him. In vain Voltaire tried to get justice; none would raise a hand against the proud and haughty Rohan family, which, fearing vengeance upon their young scion, had Voltaire incarcerated. Now for a second time he found himself in the Bastille. His commitment here was presently changed to exile to England.

He went to England at the age of thirty-two with his ideas unformed; he returned three years later matured and definite in purpose. Consequently this second period of his life is of marked significance to the student of his career. Smarting under the arrogance of a contemptuous nobility, taught by experience of the pernicious *lettres de cachet* system, awakened to the partiality of justice as adminis-

tered by his government, Voltaire was well prepared to look favorably upon English freedom. He had known Bolingbroke in France; now he met many gifted English writers and heard others discussed; he was presented at court and dined by Lord Chesterfield. Pope and Swift were writing at this time; Locke was still in men's minds and Newton was nearing the close of his career. Voltaire quickly acquired the English language and gratified to the full his love for sociability. His biography of Charles XII of Sweden was here begun and the *Lettres philosophiques* composed—destined to win him the lasting enmity of the French Court.

When these famous letters were published later, it was not strange that despotism scented danger. Cite for example barbed sentences such as these: "An Englishman, being a free man, goes to heaven by what path he pleases"; "Here a man is not exempt from paying certain taxes because he is a noble or a priest; all taxes are voted by the House of Commons"; "The peasant . . . is well dressed; he is not afraid to increase the number of his herd or to cover his roof with tiles for fear his taxes will be raised the coming year."

Before the end of 1729 Voltaire was back in Paris. The publication of the *Henriade* brought him renown throughout cultured Europe. The reader today views with wonder the extravagant praise which greeted this epic poem, rated by contemporaries above the world's great epics. However, Voltaire was never permitted to bask long in peace and favor. The indignation aroused by his *English Letters* caused him to seek shelter on the borders of Lorraine, in the chateau of Madame de Châtenet, whose influence upon him for a dozen years or more was preponderant.

Voltaire's residence with Madame de Châtenet at Cirey is often spoken of as the third period of his life, although such divisions are arbitrary and indicated only for the convenience of the biographer. It was highly beneficial and productive. Regardless of the love affair which drew these two remarkable people together and which, like so many affairs of the heart in the eighteenth century, was carried on directly under the eyes of a dull husband—the Marquis

de Châtenet—the isolation which this retreat afforded was favorable to Voltaire's development. The Madame de Châtenet was a highly educated woman whose mathematical and scientific studies kept her as closely occupied as was her distinguished guest. Together they studied history, to the profit of Voltaire's later writings. In those years of scathing criticism it would be expected that a woman who preferred her studies to the gossip of the day would draw down upon herself comments far from flattering from her acquaintances among the fair sex. Among the less damning criticisms, a few satirical words, written to Madame du Deffand by a guest at the castle of the Duchesse du Maine, indicate the esteem in which this woman of studious habits was regarded, her very ideas being attributed to others. Speaking of Madame de Châtenet's eagerness to get away from noise and confusion, the observer wrote: "The noise does not trouble her at night, so she told me, but in the day time, at her work, it disarranges her ideas. She is now making a revise of her 'Principles'; this is an exercise she goes through every year, otherwise they might escape and get away so far she might never recover a single one of them. I think her head is a house of detention for them and not the place of their birth, so she has to keep them carefully watched. She prefers the fine air of this occupation to all amusement, and persists in not showing herself till night-time."

It is idle to discuss the strange union of Voltaire and Madame de Châtenet, so characteristic of an age when girls of tender years were given in marriage to men acceptable to their families but often wholly uncongenial to themselves. Suffice it to say that Voltaire felt himself bound by it, though for him the passion of love was quickly over. One of his most significant poems was written when reproached by the Marquise for having ceased to love her. It has been translated thus:

"If you want me still to love
Give me back love's golden morn;
To the twilight of my days
Join, forsooth, love's happy dawn.

Even the sunrise touches night.
One hour is mine: and is no more.
We pass: the race which follows us,
Another follows: all is o'er."[2]

In 1736, four years before Prince Frederick became king of Prussia, he began a correspondence with Voltaire that lasted, with some interruptions, as long as the Frenchman lived. Himself a devotee of learning and an aspirant writer, Prince Frederick was infatuated with the mind of Voltaire and tried to lure him to Germany. The two met and in 1743 Voltaire spent a few weeks in Berlin. Many were the brilliant suppers and constant flow of wit between the Prussian ruler and his distinguished guest. However, it was not until the death of Madame de Châtenet that Voltaire took up his residence at the German court.

Meanwhile there came a respite in the hostility manifested by Louis XV toward his gifted but intractable subject. Upon the death of Armand Arouet, Voltaire received the income of one-half his estate during life. This gave him added independence. He went to Paris to assist in the festivities attendant upon the marriage of the Dauphin, for which occasion he prepared his *Princesse de Navarre*. In acknowledgment for his contribution to the wedding entertainment he was given a pension and made Historiographer Royal, also gentleman of the Royal Chamber. Due to the influence of Madame de Pompadour, in 1746, the Academy received him—somewhat reluctantly, it must be admitted—as a member. A graceful poem written to the Pompadour came to the notice of the neglected Queen Marie, whose daughters, it is said, won the consent of their royal father for the exile of Voltaire. He escaped to Cirey ere notice of disfavor could reach him, but for years he came no more to Paris.

Upon the death of Madame de Châtenet, Voltaire had no excuse longer to resist the overtures which Frederick II continued to make in hope of bringing the greatest literary lion of the age to adorn his court. With some misgivings, it is true, Voltaire accepted the invitation of long standing and repaired to Berlin, where he received a right royal welcome. Considering the inherent parsimony of the

Prussian ruler, it is amazing to read descriptions of the fêtes, entertainments and festivities which filled a portion of the early months of his residence in Germany.

Voltaire may be regarded both as a charming writer and as an intolerable satirist; as an upholder of "good taste" in literature and an example of insupportable taste in conduct. First and last, his desire for fame led him into many indiscretions and there is much concerning this famous sojourn at the Prussian court that his admirers would fain pass over with as little comment as possible. That Frederick II's intellectual passion for this brilliant writer was genuine none can doubt who review his enthusiastic correspondence. Unhappily, both he and Voltaire saw one another through the mirage of fancy, each expecting what the other could not give. Voltaire, hating despotism, loving liberty, conceived that here was opportunity to hail a "second Solomon"; the lonely Frederick, deprived of friends because a king, dreamed that here was one above the pettiness of life, whose supremacy in the realm of mind set him apart from other mortals. Dubbed "Marcus Aurelius" by Voltaire, the latter was to him a new "Apollo." It was not strange that all Europe watched this singular friendship between king and writer and wondered if such an unusual attachment could survive.

At first all went well. Voltaire was treated royally and basked in the favor of the Prussian Court. It was balm to his wounded heart after the slights and threats offered him by his own government to receive the homage paid to him as a man of genius. However, any student of his life knows that Voltaire contained within himself two traits that boded ill for the continuance of a king's friendship. In the first place he possessed the thrift and monetary ambitions of his bourgeois antecedents; secondly, he spared few if any when he could employ to advantage his wit and satire. Considering the imperious pride of Frederick the Great and the dignity of a Prussian Court, it might be regarded as a foregone conclusion that trouble would soon be brewing.

The currency of Saxony was depreciated and at the urgent request of its ruler, the Prussian government had

forbidden its people to speculate in it. Seeing a chance to turn ready money, Voltaire commissioned a Jewish money shark to purchase some of it for him and, when difficulties arose between the two, he did not hesitate to drag the unseemly transaction through the courts, to the indignation of the king, who stood aloof and did not permit Voltaire to approach him until the miserable business was concluded. Their common interest in literary affairs and King Frederick's appreciation of Voltaire's genius made it possible for friendly relations to be resumed and the famous suppers were once more held, at which the Frenchman's stories put care to flight; yet amicability was less real than apparent.

Voltaire had an invective satire which was irresistible. The Prussian king had founded an academy in which he was much interested. Its president was overbearing and resented the presence of the brilliant Frenchman at court, whose pension exceeded his own. Animosity was kindled between the two, and Voltaire, unwilling to see his own position jeopardized, wrote a burning satire wherein this unhappy savant was made utterly ridiculous in the eyes of all who saw it. It is said that Frederick was convulsed with laughter when the author read it to him, but forbade Voltaire to have it published. However, unwilling to lose credit for so much wit, he took base advantage of the king's permission to print one of his books at the royal press and inserted this scathing article on top of the publication authorized. So a tract which made a fool of Frederick's academy was printed by the royal press and circulated before the mischief was apprehended. Who can blame Frederick for now abandoning his distinguished guest or having him detained on the border until a volume of unpublished poems, written and presented to him by his majesty in halcyon days, should be returned? How could he be sure that this might not appear in cold type to embarrass its writer?

It is usual for biographers to dwell upon Voltaire's discomfiture during these annoying days. As a matter of fact, he richly deserved it, for he had taken advantage of a friendship seldom offered by a ruler to a writer, however

gifted. A king has few equals and no friends, and, while it is idle to ask what might have been under other conditions, we may well wonder what might have been the result had Voltaire respected the hospitality extended him and held himself aloof from concerns other than those wherein two congenial spirits of unequal rank might mingle undisturbed; Frederick found few whom he could trust, and his anger kindled at the slightest remembrance of these outrages for years after, while Voltaire was surprised to learn that there were sharp limits beyond which even he might not pass.

To his sister, with whom he was confidential, Frederick the Great wrote of his deep disgust over these experiences. One's heart goes out to the cold cynic when he says: "It must be a consolation to animals to see that people with minds are often no better than they." Long afterwards, the Prussian king wrote to Voltaire: "You have done me great wrongs. I have forgiven them all and I even wish—to forget them. But if you had not had to do with a madman in love with your noble genius, you would not have got off so well. . . . Do you want sweet things? Very good; I will tell you some truths. I esteem in you the finest genius that the ages have borne; I admire your poesy; I love your prose. . . . You are charming in conversation; you know how to amuse and instruct at the same time. . . . You have such graces of mind that you can offend and yet at the same time deserve the indulgence of those who know you."[3]

The king who penned these words was himself only second to Voltaire in conversational charm, and his keen mind prepared him to appreciate the savant of the century.

However, the personal relationship between two men is of slight account in the world's history, and to wish that Voltaire had conducted himself with finer feeling at the Prussian court is to wish that he had been other than he was. A great work lay ahead of him which could not be achieved at a despot's court. He lacked a sword, as he said, but had a pen—a pen that was even more deadly. An artificial system of society which ground down the masses and exalted an idle aristocracy rested on fragile props. It was

his mission to hold these tottering supports up to the view of all men, making them so ridiculous and amusing withal that even the fishwomen of Paris and the brutal peasants of the country might appraise them correctly in years which were fast approaching. It was for him to inscribe the new doctrines on the annals of his generation so incisively that the Patriots of 1791 could exalt his memory and say of him: "He prepared us for liberty." In comparison with that mighty service to his fellow men, offense given a monarch or the violation of convention's laws counts for little.

Yet, for the moment Voltaire was in a curious position. He was not wanted longer in Germany, and in response to his attempt through friends to gauge the royal pulse in France it became plain that he was no more desired in Paris. Whither, then, should he turn? It is known that he even considered taking up a residence among the Quakers of Philadelphia. Presently the problem was solved by the acquisition of an estate in Switzerland. He remodeled an old castle near the border of France and Geneva and established a domicile there.

"Thus, as he said, he had his front legs in Switzerland and his hind legs in France. Did the King of France appear at the point of openly resenting *Candides* and *Encyclopedies* and *Pucelles,* it was only necessary to harness the six mares to the coach and a short drive brought the erring philosopher to safety and Switzerland; and, similarly, another short drive would leave the Magnificent Council (of Geneva) helpless. The only point to observe was not to be at war with both authorities at once."[4]

At Ferney, Voltaire held court like any king. To be sure, he was often in bed, "at the point of death," which state became well nigh normal with him, so frequently was it either true or affected. Visitors flocked thither to see him in great numbers and employed every ruse to gain admission to the "Patriarch." So insistent were many of these self-invited guests that measures had to be taken to protect the writer's time.

"One caller who had received a message to this effect returned the next day. 'Tell him I am dying again. And if he comes any more, say I am dead and buried.'

The Louvre and Its Beautiful Gardens

One of Many Book Stands on the "Rive Gauche" (Left Bank) of the Seine in Paris

"Another visitor, when told Voltaire was ill, shrewdly replied that he was a doctor and should like to feel his pulse. When Voltaire sent down a message to say he was dead, the visitor replied, 'Then I will bury him. In my profession I am used to burying people.' His humor appealed to Voltaire's. He was admitted. 'You seem to take me for some curious animal,' said Voltaire. 'Yes, Monsieur, for the Phœnix.'

" 'Very well; the charge to see me is twelve sous.'

" 'Here are twenty-four,' said the visitor. 'I will come again tomorrow.'

"He did, and on many tomorrows and was received as a friend. But all the importunate were not so clever."[5]

All his life Voltaire had cried out against *Intolerance*—in religion, in the courts, in society. At Ferney he espoused the cause of persecuted Protestants, of the poor and oppressed; at the same time he gave practical expression to his theories on his estate.

His most mature and, in several cases, his best writing was done here. Realizing that the new teachings of Diderot's *Encyclopædia* could never reach any but those possessed of means, he wrote cheap pamphlets for common circulation. They were prohibited in France but crept in as wrapping paper and in unsuspected ways. Many of his books had been publicly burned in Paris by the hangsman; yet this only gave them enhanced popularity and they were commonly seen in coffee houses and wherever the enlightened gathered.

"Voltaire labored also by example. He found Ferney a wretched hamlet of huts; he left it a flourishing and prosperous village. Expert watch- and clock-makers were allowed to settle at Ferney; houses were built for them; religious toleration was enforced, so that Protestant and Catholic worked harmoniously together, while Voltaire advertised his watches all over Europe, praised them in letters to kings, empresses, grand dukes and ambassadors, who hastened obediently to buy them. He founded a silk manufactory and sent the first pair of silk stockings, made with his own hands, to the Duchesse de Choiseul; of course, all the other court ladies had to wear Ferney stockings. He started lace-

making; turned himself into a first-rate farmer; cultivated his land scientifically. . . . He negotiated and carried out successfully a scheme for ridding the district of Gex of the tax-farmers by a fixed annual payment."[6]

Finally Voltaire planned a visit to his beloved Paris, of which the condemnation of his books had so long deprived him. To be sure, court and clergy frowned at news of his coming, but the people were wild with joy. He belonged to them, had pled their cause, had toiled his life long against despotism and intolerance. He was coming and the capital was mad with joy. The theatres put his plays upon the stage; his appearance in the streets precipitated crowds and processions. When he drove to the Academy in March, 1778, the members came in a body to meet him whom in 1746 they had admitted so coldly into their ranks. His play, *Irene,* was interrupted that a wreath might be placed upon his head and honors shown him.

But the "Patriarch" was now eighty-four years of age. Never in good health, at this time of life he was ill-prepared to withstand the excitement of crowds and the great city. There was a final flame of two brief months and then an end of mortal life. The caustic tongue was stilled; the pen, which had been dreaded far more than the sword, was no longer dipped in venom to flay the hypocrite and the pretender. Voltaire had indeed supplied an "impetus to the human mind"; he had portrayed existing evils with the clarity and humor of the cartoonist. Alas, he had applied the axe of wit and mockery too assiduously. With the evils he decried, all order was presently to be temporarily removed and the demons loosed by his scathing satire would take their gruesome toll from those who had so long outraged decency and justice. All his life Voltaire worked feverishly that he might not die before he had accomplished something; his prayer had been answered—his work might now be committed into other hands.

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[1] Aldington: *Voltaire,* 133.
[2] Tallentyre: *Life of Voltaire,* 186.
[3] Sainte-Beuve: *Voltaire.*
[4] Aldington: *Voltaire,* 107.
[5] Tallentyre: *Life of Voltaire,* 365.
[6] Aldington: *Voltaire,* 113.

THE PRINCE ROYAL OF PRUSSIA TO M. DE VOLTAIRE

August 8, 1736.

*Sir:*—Though I have not the honor of being personally acquainted with you, I have long known you in your works. They are treasures of genius, if I may be allowed the expression, pieces wrought with so much taste that we discover new beauties in them at every reading. I think I have discovered in them the character of their ingenious author, who does an honor to our age and to human nature. The great men among the moderns will one day be obliged to you, and to you alone, for turning the balance in their favor, in case the controversy concerning the preference due to the ancients or moderns should be revived.

To the quality of excellent poet, you add many different sorts of knowledge, which, though they have some affinity with poetry, were never superadded to it but by your pen. No poet before you could give cadence to metaphysical thoughts; this honor was reserved to you. It is the taste for philosophy that you display in your works which has made me send you my translation of *The Accusation and Defence of Wolfius,* the most celebrated philosopher of our age, who, for having diffused light over the darkest parts of metaphysics, and treated the most abstruse points in a manner equally sublime, elegant, and exact, has been cruelly accused of irreligion and atheism. Such is the fate of great men; they are constantly exposed by their superior genius to the envenomed darts of calumny and envy.

I have caused the same author's treatise upon *God, the Soul and the World* to be translated. I shall send it to you, sir, as soon as ever it is finished; and I am sure that you will be struck with the force of evidence in all its propositions; they follow geometrically, and are connected together like the links of a chain.

The tenderness which you show for all those who devote themselves to the arts and sciences makes me hope that you will not exclude me from the number of those whom you think worthy of your instruction. I consider your literary correspondence as a source of information that must be profitable to every thinking being. I might even venture

to affirm that in the whole world there are none that would not to be benefited by becoming your scholars. Without lavishing an incense unworthy to be offered you, I can say with the utmost sincerity that I discover innumerable beauties in your works. Your *Henriade* charms me; it triumphs over the injudicious criticism launched against it. The tragedy of *Cæsar* presents us with characters admirably supported. The sentiments in it are all noble and grand, and it is easy to perceive that Brutus is either a Roman, or an Englishman; Alzira adds to the graces of novelty, the happy contrast between the manners of the savage Americans and the Europeans. You show, in the character of Gusman, that Christianity, misunderstood and directed by false zeal, makes men more barbarous and cruel than Paganism itself.

Corneille, the great Corneille, the wonder of his age, if he were revived in our days, would see with astonishment, and perhaps with envy, that the tragic muse has lavished upon you those graces of which she was so sparing to him. What may not be expected from the author of so many masterly compositions? What new wonders may not come from the pen of him who delineated, in so lively and admirable a manner, *The Temple of Taste?*

This is what has made me so ardently desire to be possessed of all your works. I beg, sir, you would be so good as to send them to me, and communicate them all without reserve. If, among your manuscripts, there should be any which a necessary circumspection should induce you to conceal from the public, I promise to make it a profound secret, and content myself with admiring it in private. I am not ignorant that the faith of princes is not thought very respectable in these days; but I hope you will not let yourself be prepossessed by vulgar prejudices, and that you will make an exception in my favor.

I shall think myself more rich in possessing your works than I could ever be made by all the transitory favors of fortune, of which we are deprived by the same chance that bestows them on us. The first—I mean your works—we may make our own by the assistance of memory, and they last as long as our memory lasts. As I know the weakness of

mine, I hesitate a long time upon the choice of things worthy to be deposited in it. . . .

Your poetry has qualities which make it respectable, and worthy to be the study and admiration of all men of taste; they comprise a complete course of morality, by which men are taught both to act and to think; virtue is therein painted in its most beautiful colors; the idea of true glory is ascertained and inspires us with the love of virtue in a manner so delicate, that whoever has read your works is fired with an ambition to tread in your footsteps. How many times have I said to myself: "Wretch, lay down a burden which thou art unable to bear; no man can imitate Voltaire without having abilities equal to his." In those moments I perceived that the advantages of birth are of no consequence; they are distinctions foreign to ourselves, and adorn only the outside. How much preferable to them are the talents of the mind! How much are we indebted to those whom Nature has endowed with extraordinary qualifications! She takes pleasure in giving to some men all the capacity necessary to make progress in the sciences, and it is the duty of princes to reward their labors. Why does not glory make choice of me to crown your success? I should fear nothing but that the country here should not produce as many laurels as your works deserve. If Fate does not favor me so far as to make me constantly happy in your company, I at least hope one day to see him whom I admire at a distance, and to assure you in person that I am, with all the esteem due to those who, following the light of truth, consecrate their works to the good of the public, Your affectionate friend,

FREDERICK,
Prince Royal of Prussia.

### M. DE VOLTAIRE'S ANSWER TO THE PRINCE ROYAL OF PRUSSIA

Paris, August 26, 1736.

*Sir:*—I must be insensible if I was not highly pleased with the letter with which your royal highness honored me; my self-love received high satisfaction from it; but the love of humankind, which always animated my heart, and which

I will presume to say is my distinguishing characteristic, gave me a much purer delight when I saw that there is in the world a prince who thinks like a man, a philosophical prince born to make the human species happy.

Give me leave to tell you, that there is not a man living who is not in duty bound to thank you for the care you take to improve by sound philosophy a soul by nature framed for government. Depend upon it, there never were any kings who really deserved the name of good, but those who, like you, began by endeavoring to acquire knowledge, to study human nature, to love truth, and to detest persecution and superstition. Any prince who thinks in this manner may revive the golden age in his dominions. Why do so few kings seek such happiness? Your royal highness must be sensible that it is because most of them think more of royalty than of humanity; you observe the very reverse of this conduct. Depend upon it, if the hurry of business and the malice of men do not spoil so fine a character, you will be one day adored by your people, and beloved by the whole world; all those who deserve the name of philosophers will repair to your dominions; and as celebrated artists crowd to countries where their respective arts are encouraged, your throne will be surrounded by men who think.

The renowned Queen Christina quitted her dominions in order to go in quest of the arts. Reign, my lord, and let the arts come in quest of you. . . .

If your royal highness has not been displeased with the *Henriade,* I should thank that love of truth, that horror of faction, persecution, superstition, tyrants and rebels, which breathe through my poem. It is the work of a virtuous man, and should of consequence meet with a favorable reception from a philosophical prince.

You command me to send you my other works. I shall obey you, my lord; I shall submit them to your judgment; you will to me supply the place of the public. I will submit to you whatever I have advanced in philosophy; your information shall be my recompense; it is a recompense which few sovereigns have to give. I may depend upon your secrecy; your virtue must equal your knowledge.

I should look upon it as a singular happiness to have it in my power to come and pay my court to your royal highness. Travelers go to Rome to see churches, pictures and bas relievos. Such a prince as you is much more deserving of a traveler's attention; a prince of such merit is much more uncommon sight. But friendship, which detains me in my present retreat, will not permit me to quit it. You appear to me to be more a man than a prince, and you will, without doubt, permit me, my lord, to prefer my friends even to kings.

In whatever corner of the world I end my life, be assured, my lord, I will always offer up my best wishes for you—that is, for the happiness of a whole nation. My soul will be always in the number of your subjects; your glory will be always dear to me. It shall be my constant prayer that you may always be like yourself, and that other kings may be like you.

I am, with the profoundest respect,

Your royal highness's humble servant,

VOLTAIRE.

## VOLTAIRE'S WRITINGS

If it be difficult to narrate briefly the story of this active life that lacked but fourteen years to complete a century, how much more perplexing must it be to convey any conception of a literary output which has been printed in recent times in ninety-two volumes? The mere enumeration of Voltaire's literary achievements requires no small space. His most productive period was the last, and no indication of mental exhaustion is to be found in the final pages to come from his pen.

For convenience sake, brushing chronology aside, we may speak of Voltaire as a poet, a playwright, a critic, a philosopher. He did much in the field of history and biography. Ten thousand of his letters survive and those which would have been valued above all others—the ones written to Madame de Châtenet, are known to have been burned after her death. Best known of all his writings to the present generation are his tales and romances—and this enumeration still leaves his unnumbered pamphlets entirely unmentioned.

Two long poems and short ones beyond count were composed by this versatile author. Few of them are now read by Frenchmen and practically none by foreigners. *La Henriade,* an epic which won extravagant praise from contemporaries, is now thought appropriate for the study of school boys, since it recounts the exploits of Henry of Navarre in his struggle to pacify France and end savage religious wars. *La Pucelle,* a burlesque on Joan d'Arc, is offensive to most readers, although it is incomparably amusing. To understand it at all one must bear in mind that Voltaire, the destroyer of shams, hypocrisies and abuses, was a disbeliever in exalted passions, mysteries and miracles. The poem opens with the significant line: "I am not one to extol the saints"—and at least this statement has never been refuted. The age was one of sophistication; even churchmen scoffed at the precepts they taught to the humble. Morals have never been more lax since the age of another decaying civilization, in Rome. Consequently the humorist

allowed himself the use of much that is coarse and offensive in order to provoke a laugh; and his auditors invariably urged him to favor them with more in the same vein. For years, before this burlesque was available in print, men begged Voltaire for a single canto of *La Pucelle,* under guise of which he hit right and left at the mysteries of Christianity and the teaching of the Church.

Of the short poems, suffice it to say that in the lighter vein, turning a graceful compliment or an ingenious epigram, writing the occasional poem, touching incidents or celebrations, or casting the moment's mood into charming verse—in this field of poetry Voltaire was past-master.

*Œdipe* was written at the age of eighteen; *Irene,* shortly before Voltaire's death, and *Zaïre* not long before he was fifty. Thus it is plain that from youth to ripe old age he was engaged in dramatic production, generally in tragedy. One comedy only, *Nanine,* has been considered worthy to class as even second-rate. Curious as it may seem to us today, in his own time Voltaire was hailed as a mighty dramatist. It is doubtful if any critic of his own land rated the plays of Shakespeare above his, and, so far as Voltaire himself is concerned, he called the bard of Avon a "barbarian," although after his return from England he wrote for awhile somewhat under Shakespearean influence. He believed that French drama as created by Corneille, Racine and Molière was the most perfect the world had seen, and patterned his own plays after the productions of these playwrights. He comprehended precisely what audiences of his own day desired to see on the stage and wrote it for them. As a result, rarely are his dramas revived, and then, as a rule, by dramatic students. The modern reader is interested in them—if at all—for the daring lines that their ingenious writer managed to get past the censor, ridiculing existing evils under the guise of what had happened long ago. It would have been impossible for Voltaire to satirize the Christian religion on the public stage, so he wrote a play called *Mahomet,* wherein the observant could easily detect similarity between intolerance as exercised by the prophet of Allah and by Holy Church, or Calvinist. In addi-

tion to the plays already mentioned, *Brutus* and *La Mort de Cesar* are probably best known.

Beyond question Voltaire was most facile in his prose. In his hands it has been said "French prose became one of the most supple, elegant and precise instruments of expression ever framed by civilized men."[1]

He was among the first writers of what is termed *rational* history—history not disfigured by fables. To be sure, none today would consult the historical works of Voltaire to ascertain the facts of the past, still less to learn the philosophy of history—something which he himself never grasped. So much has been brought to light during the last century, so earnestly have scholars set themselves to untangle fact from rumor, tradition and fancy, that no histories written a hundred years ago are of first value today. None the less, when Voltaire was absorbed on his *Russia Under Peter the Great,* he maintained a steady correspondence with the Russian court, Catherine the Great having placed all available documents at his disposal for the corroboration of facts. His *Age of Louis XIV* is more valuable today than the *Age of Louis XV,* as would be expected. In the first place, Voltaire lived for some time in his youth with a noble who had frequented the court of the "Sun King" and recounted to him events of that long reign with the intimacy of an eyewitness. Voltaire had opportunity to know what was happening during his own lifetime, but his relations with the court of Louis XV were not such as to enable him to see it favorably. Royal indulgence was only temporarily extended toward him after the marriage of the Dauphin, and his own indiscretions soon severed direct communication between sovereign and writer.

In his historical and biographical writings one finds frequent indication of the author's prejudices and bias. He hates despotism, and believes that religion has held men in thraldom. His likes and dislikes are forever to the fore. Yet, as Aldington observes: "There is no such thing as a perfect historian; among all literary works, histories are the most apt to fall into desuetude. We cannot deny that Voltaire's histories have ceased to be generally read,

but we can at least assert that no historian of his epoch retains a better claim to our interest and approval."[2]

Much of Voltaire's purely critical writing was undertaken to substantiate his own theories. It was when he attempted to treat of literature as a whole or to survey the gradual development of letters that his sharp limitations became apparent.

With all his cynicism and mockery, it was easy to touch Voltaire's heart for the needy and distressed, and he invariably was trying to retrieve the fortunes of this one, to minister to the distress of that one; and wherever he lived he was continually imposed upon by those who displayed no sense of gratitude or decency in turn for the favors they received at his hand. One happy exception of this thanklessness was shown by Marie Corneille, a kinswoman of the playwright. When Voltaire learned that a grand-niece of the great dramatist was in poverty, he sent for her forthwith, made her a member of his household and, that she might not lack a dowry, undertook editing commentaries on Corneille's plays. The motive was fine but the critical treatise well nigh valueless, for Voltaire never understood Corneille and his judgments of his plays were often astray. Nevertheless, it is gratifying to learn that so successful was his effort that the young woman was left with a fair income and that Voltaire found a congenial husband for her. Many other acts of kindness are inseparably associated with the life of this busy man whose achievements for one year exceeded those of many another writer in a lifetime.

Their creator regarded his tales and romances as least of his work, but posterity has reversed his opinion and places them first in popularity, at least. They were usually written to convey some truth other than a superficial glance might indicate. For example, Voltaire regarded the teaching of Leibnitz and others that this is the best possible world and everything is for the best as the veriest twaddle. Around him on every side he saw misery, intolerance, deceit and oppression. Following his usual custom, he wrote an amusing tale called *Candide,* wherein every misfortune that could befall one overtook his hero and heroine who

had been nurtured on this optimistic doctrine. Some find a summary of Voltaire's teachings in the termination of this short tale, when one character remarks to another: "Come, let us cultivate the garden. To do our work is all that remains to us in the midst of conditions we cannot remedy." *Zadig* was written at the court of Sceaux to picture the mishaps that can attend even the best-intentioned. A few lines suggest the feelings which even the short stories of this inimitable satirist awakened in an age when the whim of a king determined the destiny of his subjects and ministers gave themselves great airs. Zadig (Destiny) has been made minister of state and expects to find happiness in his new elevation.

"He made everybody feel the sacred power of the law, and nobody the weight of his importance. He did not muzzle the council of state, and let each vizier have an opinion without being affronted. When he judged a case it was not he who judged, but the law. When, however, the law was too severe he made it more lenient."

Who could fail to see the implied folly of religious strife in these sentences descriptive of sects in Babylon? "For fifteen hundred years there had been in Babylon a great dispute which had split the empire into two stubborn sects. The first claimed that one should always enter the temple of Mithra with the left foot; the other held this custom in abomination, and never entered but with the right foot. They waited the day of the Festival of the Sacred Fire to see which sect Zadig would favor. The universe had its eyes on his two feet, and the whole city was in a state of agitated suspense. Zadig entered the temple by jumping with his feet together, and proved later in an eloquent speech that the God of heaven and earth, who has no respect of persons, does not esteem the left leg more than the right, or the right more than the left."

Hair-splitting critics, who esteemed themselves criterions of style, might, if they wished, take to heart the paragraph which followed:

"The Envious and his wife maintained that there were not enough figures of speech in his discourse, and that he had not made the hills and mountains dance enough. 'He is

too dry,' they said. 'He has no genius. When he talks one does not see the ocean take to flight, or the stars fall or the sun melt like wax. He lacks the good, flowery Asiatic style.'

"Zadig was content to have the style of good sense."

In this last line we might easily substitute the name Voltaire for Zadig. He was the rationalistic writer who never missed a chance to fling subtle gibes at the Old Testament poets whose "mountains danced" and "hills rejoiced." It was his limitation to be unable to appreciate pastoral poetry and hence to find in it only a matter for jest. He could dismiss the beautiful similes in the Song of Solomon with mirthful and inane comments, saying of the lines: "Thy breasts are like two young roes that feed among the lilies"—"I have seen none so large."

It is idle to ask of people what they are incapable of giving. Voltaire, like the remote *Deus* whom he acknowledged, was no respecter of persons, no respecter of sentiment nor of those religious beliefs which, however puerile, comfort the unthinking and solace the afflicted. This shatterer of idols hit each impartially, and his ruthless destruction while removing evil removed some of the good.

It is the bulky correspondence of Voltaire that causes the modern to gaze in deepest astonishment. In this age of short "cuts," of machine-made music and rapid transit, the generality of men have scant time for friendly letters, even to intimates. Contrast what they are pleased to call their "strenuous lives" with that of the sage of Ferney, who had time to stage a play for the entertainment of a guest, to plead the cause of a humble peasant falsely accused; time to write pamphlets to arouse the oppressed classes held in the leading-strings of despotism; and opportunity to correspond with kings, philosophers, writers, scholars and acquaintances, with the simple and learned, throughout Europe. "This is my thirtieth letter for today," he sometimes wrote—yet the thirtieth would be as refreshing and witty as the first. It is the tremendous capacity of the man for work that staggers us—his inexhaustibility, his virility and matchless humor. His correspondence with Frederick II alone fills a large volume. Four

such volumes might have been formed of letters to Madame de Châtenet that were afterwards destroyed. Almost every year additional correspondence is coming to light, and it will be a fine service to the public when someone of discernment shall edit a few hundred from the thousands of his remaining letters, since in them bits of original poetry and flashes of his genius abound, and the style and order so characteristic of this eighteenth century genius are clearly exemplified.

It remains to speak of Voltaire's political and philosophical writings and the two may be appropriately considered together. For he formulated no system to account for creation and the universe. He was primarily interested in ethics and human conduct. He detested tyranny and dogma and, above all, intolerance. *"Ecraser l'infame!"* was his continual cry. Eradicate intolerance. This means little to us now when we see comparatively little intolerance to wipe out; but it was far otherwise before the French Revolution. Intolerance for the lower classes, intolerance for the religious convictions of others, intolerance in the courts of justice, among churchmen, among nobles. Everywhere were to be seen flagrant infamies and injustices. There are two ways of dealing with abuses: one is to oppose them with violence and bloodshed; another, to make ridiculous. This last was simple for the satirist, who, like Rabelais, laughed with those against whom his shafts were directed unless his own prejudices were aroused—then he flayed unmercifully.

Carlyle, who could scarcely find words sufficiently damning for Voltaire, says of him that he never uttered a simple, fine, original thought. In a measure this was true. His part was rather to popularize and spread abroad many thoughts that others had uttered or written in tomes which did not reach the commonality at all. A complete set of Diderot's *Encyclopædia* cost several hundred guineas. What matter how true its teachings if the multitudes never see it? Let us write inexpensive tracts, ascribe them to poor parsons, to Chinese tourists, to obscure doctors—to anyone suggested by the mood and hour. Scatter them hither and yon, where he who runs may read. So shall the glad tidings

of a brotherhood of men become generally accepted and ultimately become manifest in form. Some such motion as this possessed the patriarch of Ferney, who wrote furiously and endlessly lest the Great Reaper still his pen ere he reached the people with his message.

Brandes' observation about the last period of Voltaire's life being most productive is everywhere conceded. "The years spent at Ferney are in every respect the most glorious period of Voltaire's life. It was from there that he, as the champion of justice and tolerance, compassed achievements which no one could have believed to be within the power of a private individual whose only weapon was his pen."

That he never conceived of the excesses of the Revolution, nor even of a Revolution at all, is probable. He aimed to abolish abuses and preserve the state. However, he and his contemporary, Rousseau, had so completely undermined the supports of authority that when the deluge came it came with a vengeance. Idle now to talk of moderation when the streams are let loose; useless to attempt to stay the devastation of the floods. The emigrés who fled from the wrath to come realized this and hated the pioneers of the Revolution with undying hatred, while the masses saluted them, dead or alive, as saviors.

The Archbishop of Paris hastened to forbid clerics to bury Voltaire, but by rapid work his interment was accomplished ere the command could be circulated. In 1791 the people of Paris paid their respects to their great advocate. His remains were brought from Romilly, where in 1778 they had been hastily concealed, to the site of the Bastile, and ceremonies were held in his honor, while upon a stone which had once been a part of the Bastile walls were graven words which may be translated: "Accept, Voltaire, at this spot, where Despotism made thee a prisoner, the honors now accorded thee by thy country." When in July of the year he was entombed in the Pantheon, his heart, which had been removed after death, was brought for interment with the body, the funeral chariot bearing the words: *"Son esprit est partout et son coeur est ici"* ("His mind is everywhere; his heart is here").

None the less, when in aftertimes the tomb was opened, it proved to be empty. It had been too distasteful to the restored Bourbons to think that one of the instigators of the mighty upheaval which destroyed the old régime lay at state in the capital.

[1] Aldington: *Voltaire*, 174.
[2] Ibid., 194.

## From THE PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY

### Abbé

The word *abbé,* let it be remembered, signifies father. If you become one you render a service to the state; you doubtless perform the best work that a man can perform; you give birth to a thinking being: in this action there is something divine. But if you are only *Monsieur l'Abbé* because you have had your head shaved, wear a small collar and a short cloak, and are waiting for a fat benefice, you do not deserve the name of abbé.

The ancient monks gave this name to the superior whom they elected; the *abbé* was their spiritual father. What different things do the same words signify at different times! The spiritual *abbé* was once a poor man at the head of others equally poor; but the poor spiritual fathers have since had incomes of two hundred or four hundred thousand livres, and there are poor spiritual fathers in Germany who have regiments of guards.

A poor man, making a vow of poverty, and in consequence becoming a sovereign? Truly, this is intolerable. The laws exclaim against such an abuse; religion is indignant at it, and the really poor, who want food and clothing, appeal to heaven against *Monsieur l'Abbé.*

But I hear the *abbés* of Italy, Germany, Flanders, and Burgundy ask: "Why are not we to accumulate wealth and honors? Why are we not to become princes? The bishops are, who were originally poor, like us; they have enriched and elevated themselves; one of them has become superior even to kings; let us imitate them as far as we are able."

Gentlemen, you are right. Invade the land; it belongs to him whose strength or skill obtains possession of it. You have made ample use of the times of ignorance, superstition, and infatuation, to strip us of our inheritances, and trample us under your feet, that you might fatten on the substance of the unfortunate. Tremble, for fear that the day of reason will arrive!

### Customs—Usages

There are, it is said, one hundred and forty-four customs in France which possess the force of law.

These laws are almost all different in different places. A man that travels in this country changes his law almost as often as he changes his horses. The majority of these customs were not reduced to writing until the time of Charles VII, the reason of which probably was that few people knew how to write. They then copied a part of the customs of a part of Ponthieu, but this great work was not aided by the Picards until Charles VIII. There were but sixteen digests in the time of Louis XII, but our jurisprudence is so improved there are now but few customs which have not a variety of commentators, all of whom are of different opinions. There are already twenty-six upon the customs of Paris. The judges know not which to prefer, but, to put them at their ease the custom of Paris has been just turned into verse. It was in this manner that the Delphian pythoness of old declared her oracles.

Weights and measures differ as much as customs, so that which is correct in the faubourg of Montmartre is otherwise in the abbey of St. Denis. The Lord pity us!

* * * *

### Flattery

I find not one monument of flattery in remote antiquity; there is no flattery in Hesiod—none in Homer. Their stories are not addressed to a Greek elevated to some dignity, nor to his lady; as each canto of Thomson's "Seasons" is dedicated to some person of rank, or as so many forgotten epistles in verse have been dedicated, in England, to gentlemen or ladies of quality, with a brief eulogy, and the arms of the patron or patroness placed at the head of the work.

Nor is there any flattery in Demosthenes. This way of asking alms harmoniously began, if I mistake not, with Pindar. No hand can be stretched out more emphatically.

It appears to me that among the Romans great flattery is to be dated from the time of Augustus. Julius Caesar

had scarcely time to be flattered. There is not extant any dedicatory epistle to Sulla, Marius, or Carbo, nor to their wives, or their mistresses. I can well believe that very bad verses were presented to Lucullus and Pompey; but, thank God, we do not have them.

It is a great spectacle to behold Cicero equal in dignity to Caesar, speaking before him as advocate for a king of Bithynia and Lesser Armenia, named Deiotarus, accused of laying ambuscades for him, and even designing to assassinate him. Cicero begins with acknowledging that he is disconcerted in his presence. He calls him the vanquisher of the world—"*victorem orbis terrarium.*" He flatters him; but this adulation does not yet amount to baseness; some sense of shame still remains.

But with Augustus there are no longer any bounds; the senate decrees his apotheosis during his lifetime. Under the succeeding emperors this flattery becomes the ordinary tribute, and is no longer anything more than a style. It is impossible to flatter anyone when the most extravagant adulation has become the ordinary currency.

In Europe we have had no great monuments of flattery before Louis XIV. His father, Louis XIII, had very little incense offered him. We find no mention of him, except in one or two of Malherbe's odes. There, indeed, according to custom, he is called "thou greatest of kings"—as the Spanish poets say to the King of Spain and the English poets (laureate) to the King of England; but the better part of the poet's praises is bestowed on Cardinal Richelieu, whose soul is great and fearless; who practises so well the healing art of government, and who knows how to cure all our evils.

Upon Louis XIV flattery came in a deluge. But he was not like the man said to have been smothered by the rose leaves heaped upon him; on the contrary, he thrived the more.

Flattery, when it has some plausible pretext, may not be so pernicious as it has been thought; it sometimes encourages to great acts; but its excess is vicious, like the excess of satire. La Fontaine says, and pretends to say it after Æsop:

Your flattery to three sorts of folks apply—
You cannot say too civil things
To gods, to mistresses, and kings;
So honest Æsop said—and so say I.

Honest Æsop said no such thing; nor do we find that he flattered any king, or any concubine. It must not be thought that kings are in reality flattered by all the flatteries that are heaped upon them; for the greater number never reach them.

* * * *

## God—Gods

The reader cannot too carefully bear in mind that this dictionary has not been written for the purpose of repeating what so many others have said.

The knowledge of a God is not impressed upon us by the hands of Nature, for then men would all have the same idea; and no idea is born with us. It does not come to us like the perception of light, of the ground, etc., which we receive as soon as our eyes and our understandings are opened. Is it a philosophical idea? No; men admitted the existence of gods before they were philosophers.

Whence, then, is this idea derived? From feeling, and from that natural logic which unfolds itself with age, even in the rudest of mankind. Astonishing effects of Nature were beheld—harvests and barrenness, fair weather and storms, benefits and scourges; and the hand of a master was felt. Chiefs were necessary to govern societies; and it was needful to admit sovereigns of these new sovereigns whom human weakness had given itself—beings before whose power these men who could bear down their fellow-men might tremble. The first sovereigns in their time employed these notions to cement their power. Such were the first steps; thus every little society had its god. These notions were rude because everything was rude. It is very natural to reason by analogy. One society under a chief did not deny that the neighboring tribe should likewise have its judge, or its captain; consequently it could not deny that the other should also have its god. But as it was to the interest of each tribe that its captain should be the

best, it was also interested in believing, and consequently it did believe, that the gods of one nation fought against the gods of another. Hence the numerous passages in the Hebrew books, which we find constantly disclosing the opinion entertained by the Jews, that the gods of their enemies existed, but that they were inferior to the God of the Jews.

Meanwhile, in the great states where the progress of society allowed to individuals the enjoyment of speculative leisure, there were priests, Magi, and philosophers.

Some of these perfected their reason so far as to acknowledge in secret one only and universal god. So, although the ancient Egyptians adored Osiri, Osiris, or rather Osireth (which signifies "This land is mine"); though they also adored other superior beings, yet they admitted one supreme, one only principal god, whom they called "*Knef,*" whose symbol was a sphere placed on the frontispiece of the temple.

After this model the Greeks had their Zeus, their Jupiter, the master of the other gods, who were but what the angels are with the Babylonians and the Hebrews, and the saints with the Christians of the Roman communion.

It is a more thorny question than it has been considered, and one by no means profoundly examined, whether several gods, equal in power, can exist at the same time.

We have no adequate idea of the Divinity; we creep on from conjecture to conjecture, from likelihood to probability. We have very few certainties. There is something; therefore there is something eternal; for nothing is produced from nothing. Here is a certain truth on which the mind reposes. Every work which shows us means and an end announces a workman; then this universe, composed of springs, of means, each of which has its end, discovers a most mighty, a most intelligent, workman. Here is a probability approaching the greatest certainty. But is this supreme artificer infinite? Is he everywhere? Is he in one place? How are we, with our feeble intelligence and limited knowledge, to answer these questions?

My reason alone proves to me a being who has arranged the matter of this world; but my reason is unable to prove

to me that he made this matter—that he brought it out of nothing. All the sages of antiquity, without exception, believed matter to be eternal, and existing by itself. All then that I can do, without the aid of superior light, is to believe that the God of this world is also eternal, and existing by Himself. God and matter exist by the nature of things. May not other gods exist, as well as other worlds? Whole nations, and very enlightened schools, have clearly admitted an eternal war between two equal powers. Assuredly, Nature can more easily suffer the existence of several independent beings in the immensity of space, than that of limited and powerless gods in this world, of whom one can do no good, and the other no harm.

If God and matter exist from all eternity, as antiquity believed, here, then, are two necessary beings; now, if there be two necessary beings, there may be thirty. These doubts alone, which are the germ of an infinity of reflections, serve at least to convince us of the feebleness of our understanding. We must, with Cicero, confess our ignorance of the nature of the Divinity; we shall never know any more of it than he did.

In vain do the schools tell us that God is infinite negatively and not privatively—"*formaliter et non materialiter,*" that He is the first act, the middle, and the last—that He is everywhere without being in any place; a hundred pages of commentaries on definitions like these cannot give us the smallest light. We have no steps whereby to arrive at such knowledge.

We feel that we are under the hand of an invisible being; this is all; we cannot advance one step farther. It is mad temerity to seek to divine what this being is—whether he is extended or not, whether he is in one place or not, how he exists, or how he operates.

## STORY OF A GOOD BRAHMIN

1759

On my travels I met an old Brahmin, a very wise man, of marked intellect and great learning. Furthermore, he was rich and, consequently, all the wiser, because, lacking nothing, he needed to deceive nobody. His household was very well managed by three handsome women who set themselves out to please him. When he was not amusing himself with his women, he passed the time in philosophizing. Near his house, which was beautifully decorated and had charming gardens attached, there lived a narrow-minded old Indian woman; she was a simpleton, and rather poor.

Said the Brahmin to me one day: "I wish I had never been born!" On my asking why, he answered: "I have been studying forty years, and that is forty years wasted. I teach others and myself am ignorant of everything. Such a state of affairs fills my soul with so much humiliation and disgust that my life is intolerable. I was born in Time, I live in Time, and yet I do not know what Time is. I am at a point between two eternities, as our wise men say, and I have no conception of eternity. I am composed of matter; I think, but I have never been able to learn what produces my thought. I do not know whether or no my understanding is a simple faculty inside me, such as those of walking and digesting, and whether or no I think with my head as I grip with my hands. Not only is the cause of my thought unknown to me; the cause of my actions is equally a mystery. I do not know why I exist, and yet every day people ask me questions on all these points. I have to reply, and as I have nothing really worth saying, I talk a great deal, and am ashamed of myself afterwards for having talked.

"It is worse still when I am asked if Brahma was born of Vishnu or if they are both eternal. God is my witness that I have not the remotest idea, and my ignorance shows itself in my replies. 'Ah, Holy One,' people say to me, 'tell us why evil pervades the earth.' I am in as great a diffi-

culty as those who ask me this question. Sometimes I tell them that everything is as well as can be, but those who have been ruined and broken in the wars do not believe a word of it—and no more do I. I retire to my home stricken at my own curiosity and ignorance. I read our ancient books, and they double my darkness. I talk to my companions; some answer me that we must enjoy life and make game of mankind; others think they know a lot and lose themselves in a maze of wild ideas. Everything increases my anguish. I am ready sometimes to despair when I think that after all my seeking I do not know whence I came, whither I go, what I am nor what I shall become."

The good man's condition really worried me. Nobody was more rational or more sincere than he. I perceived that his unhappiness increased in proportion as his understanding developed and his insight grew.

The same day I saw the old woman who lived near him. I asked her if she had ever been troubled by the thought that she was ignorant of the nature of her soul. She did not even understand my question. Never in all her life had she reflected for one single moment on one single point of all those which tormented the Brahmin. She believed with all her heart in the metamorphosis of Vishnu and, provided she could obtain a little Ganges water wherewith to wash herself, thought herself the happiest of women.

Struck with this mean creature's happiness, I returned to my wretched philosopher. "Are you not ashamed," said I, "to be unhappy when at your very door there lives an old automaton who thinks about nothing, and yet lives contentedly?"

"You are right," he replied. "I have told myself a hundred times that I should be happy if I were as brainless as my neighbor, and yet I do not desire such happiness."

My Brahmin's answer impressed me more than all the rest. I set to examining myself, and I saw that in truth I would not care to be happy at the price of being a simpleton.

I put the matter before some philosophers, and they were of my opinion.

"Nevertheless," said I, "there is a tremendous contradiction in this mode of thought, for, after all, the problem is—how to be happy. What does it matter whether one has brains or not? Further, those who are contented with their lot are certain of their contentment, whereas those who reason are not certain that they reason correctly. It is quite clear, therefore," I continued, "that we must choose not to have common sense, however little common sense may contribute to our discomfort." Everyone agreed with me, but I found nobody, notwithstanding, who was willing to accept the bargain of becoming a simpleton in order to become contented. From which I conclude that if we consider the question of happiness we must consider still more the question of reason.

But on reflection it seems that to prefer reason to felicity is to be very senseless. How can this contradiction be explained? Like all the other contradictions. It is matter for much talk.

### The Two Comforters

The great philosopher, Citosile, once said to a woman who was disconsolate, and who had good reason to be so: "Madame, the Queen of England, daughter to Henry IV, was as wretched as you. She was banished from her kingdom, was in great danger of losing her life at sea, and saw her royal spouse expire on a scaffold."

"I am sorry for her," said the lady, and began again to lament her own misfortunes.

"But," said Citosile, "remember the fate of Mary Stuart. She loved (but with a most chaste and virtuous affection) an excellent musician, who played admirably on the bass-viol. Her husband killed her musician before her face; and in the sequel her good friend and relative, Queen Elizabeth, who called herself a virgin, caused her head to be cut off on a scaffold covered with black, after having confined her in prison for the space of eighteen years."

"That was very cruel," replied the lady, and presently relapsed into her former melancholy.

"Perhaps," said the comforter, "you have heard of the

beautiful Joan of Naples, who was taken prisoner and strangled."

"I have a dim remembrance of her," said the afflicted lady.

"I must relate to you," continued the other, "the adventure of a sovereign princess who, within my recollection, was dethroned after supper, and who died in a desert island."

"I know her whole history," replied the lady.

"Well, then," said Citosile, "I will tell you what happened to another great princess whom I instructed in philosophy. She had a lover, as all great and beautiful princesses have. Her father surprised this lover in her company, and was so displeased with the young man's confused manner and excited countenance, that he gave him one of the most terrible blows that had ever been given in his province. The lover seized a pair of tongs and broke the head of the angry parent, who was cured with great difficulty, and who still bears the marks of the wound. The lady in a fright leaped out of the window and dislocated her foot, in consequence of which she habitually halts, though still possessed in other respects of a very handsome person. The lover was condemned to death for having broken the head of a great prince. You can imagine in what a deplorable condition the princess must have been when her lover was led to the gallows. I have seen her long ago when she was in prison, and she always spoke to me of her own misfortunes."

"And why will you not allow me to think of mine?" said the lady.

"Because," said the philosopher, "you ought not to think of them; and since so many great ladies have been so unfortunate, it ill becomes you to despair. Think of Hecuba; think of Niobe."

"Ah!" said the lady, "had I lived in their time, or in that of so many beautiful princesses, and had you endeavored to console them by a relation of my misfortunes, would they have listened to you, do you imagine?"

Next day the philosopher lost his only son, and was entirely prostrated with grief. The lady caused a catalogue

to be drawn up of all the kings who had lost their children, and carried it to the philosopher. He read it—found it very exact—and wept nevertheless.

Three months afterwards they chanced to renew their acquaintance, and were mutually surprised to find each other in such a gay and sprightly humor. To commemorate this event, they caused to be erected a beautiful statue to Time, with this inscription: "To Him Who Comforts."

## ROUSSEAU

"Men are created free and everywhere they are in fetters."

IT would be difficult to suggest two men, leaders in a common movement, more unlike than Voltaire and Rousseau. In one we prize the head—in the other the heart. They dwelt in worlds apart and to turn from one to the other is to experience something of a shock. These were the two mightiest forerunners of the French Revolution, but what contrasts do they present! The gaunt, emaciated Voltaire was dominated by his intellect; the sensitive Rousseau, by his emotions. If life be a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel, then the mocking smile of the one, the fear-pursued mind of the other, are truly revealing.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau was born in Geneva in June of 1712. His birth cost the life of his mother and this explains in a great measure his unsystematic, ill-conditioned upbringing during childhood and youth. His father was an emotional Frenchman, a watchmaker by trade, who had married the daughter of a Huguenot preacher. However, the ancestors of both families were pure French. From his *Confessions,* which supply most that is known of Rousseau's early life, we learn that, with the desire of teaching the child to read when he was but six years of age, father and son used to spend long evenings together bending over love stories and sentimental romances. Often, Rousseau goes on to say, morn would break ere they were aware and his parent would hurry him off to bed, saying: "I am more of a child than you." Together, they wept "streams of tears" over sentimental maidens and their amours. As a result of such pernicious training, the boy at the age of eight had become so obsessed by sexual thoughts that the sister of a minister, with whom he and his cousin were set to study, aroused feelings—according to his *Confessions*—which bespeak the perverted mind, notwithstanding the fact that she was old enough to be his mother and wholly un-

aware of his fancies. Here, apparently, was a fitting subject for a Freud—a child to be psycho-analyzed and brought back to a wholesome, normal outlook by the most careful guidance.

No such good fortune overtook him; before he was ten his father, falling into difficulties with the authorities in Geneva, had gone to Lyons, leaving the boy to the protection of an uncle. He was first apprenticed to a notary and then to an engraver and proved himself ill adapted to either calling. When sixteen he ran away from the second employer and betook himself to Savoy.

Thenceforward for some years he led a roving existence, sometimes faring badly and sometimes worse. He frequently fell in with disreputable company and very soon acquired vices which vagabonds had to teach. However, had he not possessed abilities beyond those of such ill-chosen companionship, his name would not have become a watchword in days of the French Revolution or found a place among the immortals.

Those whose interest inspires them to trace, step by step, the stages of Rousseau's unfoldment have ready at hand the material from which such a narrative can alone be reconstructed: his remarkable *Confessions,* and of them a word of caution. It was the custom, in the eighteenth century, for people to write their memoirs. Both men and women wrote them in ever-increasing numbers. Catherine II followed the bent of the times, as many a *saloniére* had done before. It is safe to say that the majority of these memoirs portray the writer much as he hoped to be regarded; in some cases statements written down by the diarist are disproved by contemporary testimony; in many instances they are open to doubt. Rousseau, on the contrary, conceived of laying open to the gaze of the world not only his virtues but his faults—to show forth his life as in a mirror, sparing nothing.

Pepys found relief in pouring out upon paper his inmost thoughts, but he couched them in cipher which none but himself could read, and it seems never to have occurred to him that a time might come when an inquiring mind would decipher his secrets, even as the meaning of hieroglyphics

has been laid bare. When we read the astonishing revelations of his diary, we at least know that it was not expected that others would become privy to his thoughts. Rousseau deliberately set down his actions, experiences and feelings with the avowed purpose of making them known to others. Indeed, one is compelled to believe that in some instances he found a kind of satisfaction in making out a case against himself worse than in reality it probably was—a morbid joy in painting his sins a little blacker, his emotions a little keener, his sufferings somewhat sharper than they may have been at junctures under discussion. It is a matter of reasonable doubt whether it is given to any mortal to reconstruct in maturity the exact feelings of childhood; while in general the course of development remains fresh in memory, one has but to return to the scenes of earliest years to prove the discrepancies which inevitably arise with the lapse of time. The ancestral home seems contracted, the gardens smaller and the surroundings less imposing than memory would lead one to suppose. So, in perusal of the *Confessions* it is not amiss to make some allowance for the author and to assume, despite his eagerness to portray himself truthfully, that in some cases it is probably overdrawn.

Suffice it to say that there is nothing particularly edifying in the life experiences of Rousseau and such as they were, it would be idle to repeat what he has set forth in detail.

He came into public notice in 1749 by winning a prize offered by the Academy of Dijon for the best thesis on the subject: "Has civilization corrupted or purified morals?" It was characteristic of Rousseau that he espoused the negative and won the contest by warmly extolling primitive life. This gives a key to his later socialistic writings wherein the "natural man" received fullest attention.

During his wanderings, Rousseau had acquired some slight knowledge of music and, when other means failed, he earned his living by copying musical compositions. He tried to teach music and, it will be remembered, he wrote an article concerning the art for Diderot's Encyclopædia. Regrettably, his knowledge of the subject was slight and his

attempt to devise a new system of annotating music failed entirely.

An operetta which he composed won him a purse of one hundred louis and had he obeyed a summons to court directly after, it is reasonable to suppose he would have received a pension; but either from timidity or perversity, he failed to comply with this command.

Sooner or later, Rousseau quarreled with all his friends. The publication of *Emile,* an educational treatise, which appears harmless enough to the reader today, seemed to exalt deism and consequently not only exiled its author from Catholic France but from Protestant Geneva. David Hume, the author of an English history, offered him asylum, and for awhile he enjoyed the society of literary men in London. However, it has been well said that the attention or neglect of others was equally resented by this morose Genevan and presently he was back in France, dwelling in one place or another, as indulgent admirers attempted to provide for him. Their hospitality did not in the least deter Rousseau from turning upon them, suspecting them of treachery and trouble-making. Never well balanced, always torn by his emotions and fancied injuries, Rousseau's mind was undoubtedly clouded in his later life. None has better expressed his condition than Hume. About the time Rousseau flung himself away from England because of some imaginary affront, Hume wrote to a friend: "He has read very little during his life, and he has now renounced reading altogether. He has seen very little, and he has not the slightest curiosity to see and observe. He has studied and reflected, strictly speaking, very little, and has in truth, only a very slight stock of knowledge. He has simply *felt* throughout his life; and in that regard his sensitiveness has reached a point that surpasses anything I ever saw before; but it affords him a keener sensation of pain than of pleasure. He is like a naked man, not only stripped of his clothes, but stripped of his skin, who, thus flayed to the quick, should be forced to contend with the inclemency of the elements which incessantly keep this world in turmoil."[1]

Rousseau's fame today rests upon four writings: *La*

*Nouvelle Heloïse, Emile, Social Contract,* and his *Confessions,* and of these, few but students ever concern themselves with any except the last.

*Julie ou la nouvelle Heloïse* is a romance composed in the form of letters which are supposed to pass between a man of humble position and a girl of rank. The author was much influenced by Richardson, particularly by *Clarissa Harlowe,* when he wrote this story and was himself engaged in an affair with Madame d'Houdetot, which probably suggested the idea to him. Julie is the *modern* Heloïse, contrasted with the French woman of mediæval fame whose friendship with Abelard is familiar. The romance is highly sentimental; "streams of tears" abound and comparatively few present-day lovers would peruse the tale for its own sake, however useful it may be for revelations concerning its author.

*Emile* has greater interest for us, since it led to an educational revolution and inspired such men as Froebel and Pestalozzi to reform the instruction of the young. When this epoch-making treatise was written, education was largely a matter of memory work accomplished by severity of discipline which was an inevitable part of school life. Rousseau, opposed book-learning for the young, contending that early years should be given over to observation. He urged mothers to care for their own children, not leave them to hirelings. At the time it was customary among society women for babes to be put to nurse at birth and their training was left largely to others.

Rousseau received six thousand livres for the work, his reputation having already been established.

More widely read than either of these works and productive of far greater results was his *Social Contract,* the "Bible of the Revolution." It was printed in Amsterdam at the same time as at Paris, for it was certain to invoke the animosity of the censor. The idea underlying this treatise was that originally men had been free; they had renounced freedom, Rousseau contended for the advantage of protection. Were this not provided, the conditions of the original contract were violated and the people were no longer bound. Nevertheless, Rousseau claimed, a democ-

Chantilly, One of the Most Beautiful of the Chateaux of France

L'Isle Adam, North Central France

racy could exist only in a very small state and he held that a monarchy was best for large ones. Many phrases which became popular during the revolutionary period that followed were derived from this paper: such, for example, as "Liberty, equality and fraternity" and the "consent of the governed." However, it would be a mistake to suppose that Rousseau brought forward a constructive plan for men to follow in order to recover their lost heritage. He was not a student of political science and his arguments, however ingenious, contain many gaps; but he realized the injustice of the existing social order and his warmth of feeling was far more convincing to the masses than the subtlest arguments. "Man is born free but everywhere he is bound." That needed no explanation. The first statement was gratifying to the ear and the second undeniable. Rousseau spoke from the fullness of his heart and everywhere hearts responded to him.

Few who give close attention to his writings will doubt but that much more has been read into them than was originally conceived; yet our own Constitution bears evidence of his passionate plea for justice, for liberty and quality.

With Rousseau, we find the beginning of the so-called Romantic movement as opposed to Classicism. The criterion of the classicist had been *Reason*—subject everything to reason; discard all that fails to measure to its standards. In opposition to this rationalism, idealism began to assert itself.

It would be a pleasant task to search the *Confessions* for passages that testify to the author's love of nature. Sainte-Beuve well says: "Mark well that swallow," commenting upon Rousseau's naive statement that the twitter of the swallows warned that day was near, in those childhood nights spent reading sentimental novels, with his father. One seeks in vain to find indication of a love of nature among those whose lives were spent in the whirl of artificiality of social life before the Revolution. Of salons and the court we hear much. Of formal gardens there was no lack, nor of trees trimmed into fantastic shapes. But it is this child of nature who heralds the return to a natural life, to the wholesome enjoyment of such rustic scenes as

might have delighted Francis of Assisi in another age when nature had been likewise forgotten. Exhilaration in the mountains, joy in the simple fare of the peasant, happiness in the varied aspects of the country as he journeyed to and fro—such expressions greet us on many a page of the *Confessions,* compensating for much that is unsavory, persuading us that he who thrilled so quickly at a sunset, or a mountain's grandeur had an innate love of the beautiful, and that the stains that he bore were largely exterior—the result of an unfortunate and misguided youth.

"Jean-Jacques Rousseau, like Voltaire, is one of the paradoxes of literary history. His life was full of antitheses and his influence was the opposite of what might have been expected from him. He lived for years in open violation of moral laws and was the victim of erotic madness, yet he preached virtue; he sent his children to the foundling-asylum and wrote on how to bring up the young; through pride or timidity he did his best to injure his own reputation, yet he became, with Voltaire, the most famous man of his century; he was brutal to his friends, yet they were often kind to him to the verge of unreason; he was inordinately selfish and taught altruism; he declared civilization to be a failure, yet his teachings revolutionized theories of government; he was an idler and often a ne'er-do-well, yet he inspired one of the most important literary movements in France and in Europe. He saw visions and had dreams which his idleness made it difficult for him to carry out, a task he left to others. They put into practice his seemingly wild cerebration.

"Rousseau was never wholly sane and he ended in insanity. He had a constitutional infirmity which caused him all his life actual physical suffering or morbid fear of it. . . . The various adventures of his youth and his wanderings made him more and more the prey of fancies than of cold reason. . . . Though his life is such a paradox, there is general consistency in his writings."[2]

[1] Quoted in Sainte-Beuve, *Rousseau.*
[2] Wright: *History of French Literature,* 522, 524.

## From THE CONFESSIONS OF JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

Though Turin was a greater distance from Madame de Warens than Geneva, yet, being the capital of the country I was now in, it seemed to have more connection with Annecy than a city under a different government and of a contrary religion; besides, as I undertook this journey in obedience to her, I considered myself as living under her direction, which was more than merely to continue in the neighborhood; to sum up all, the idea of a long journey coincided with my passion for rambling, which already began to assert itself. To pass the mountains to my youthful eye appeared delightful; how charming the reflection of elevating myself above my companions by the whole height of the Alps! To see the world is an almost irresistible temptation to a Genevan; accordingly I gave my consent. He who had suggested the journey was to set off in two days with his wife. I was confided and recommended to their care. They were likewise the bearers of my purse, which had been augmented by Madame de Warens, who, not contented with these kindnesses, secretly gave me a small pecuniary reinforcement, attended with ample instructions, and we departed on the Wednesday before Easter.

The next day my father arrived at Annecy, following on my trail, and accompanied by his friend, a Monsieur Rival, who was likewise a watchmaker; he was a man of sense and letters, who wrote better verses than La Motte, and spoke almost as well; what is still more to his praise, he was a man of the strictest integrity, but whose taste for literature only served to make one of his sons a comedian.

These gentlemen saw Madame de Warens, and contented themselves with lamenting with her my fate, instead of overtaking me, which (as they were on horseback and I on foot) they might have accomplished with ease. My uncle Bernard did the same thing. He arrived at Confignon, received information that I had gone to Annecy, and immediately returned to Geneva. Thus my nearest relations

seemed to have conspired with my star to consign me to the fate that awaited me. By a similar negligence, my brother was lost, and so entirely lost that it was never known what had become of him.

My father was not only a man of honour, but of the strictest probity, and endued with that magnanimity which frequently produces the most shining virtues. I may add, he was a good father, particularly to me, whom he tenderly loved; but he likewise loved his pleasures, and since we had been separated other connections had weakened his paternal affection. He had married again at Nyon, and, though his second wife was too old to expect children, she had relations. My father was united to another family, surrounded by other objects, and a variety of cares prevented my returning often to his remembrance. He was in the decline of life, and had nothing to support the inconveniences of old age; my mother's property devolved to me and my brother, but during our absence the interest of it was enjoyed by my father. This consideration had no immediate effect on his conduct, nor did it blind his sense of duty; but it had an imperceptible effect, and prevented him making use of that exertion to regain me which he would otherwise have employed; and this I think was the reason that, having traced me as far as Annecy, he stopped short, without proceeding to Chambéri, where he might have almost certainly found me; and likewise explains why, on visiting him several times since my flight, he always received me with great kindness, but never made great efforts to retain me.

This conduct in a father, whose affection and virtue I was so well convinced of, has given birth to reflections on the regulation of my own conduct which have greatly contributed to preserve the integrity of my heart. It has taught me this great lesson of morality, perhaps the only one that can have any conspicuous influence on our actions, that we should ever carefully avoid putting our interest in competition with our duty, or promise ourselves felicity from the misfortunes of others; certain that in such circumstances, however sincere our love of virtue may be, sooner or later it will give way, and we shall imperceptibly

become unjust and wicked in fact, however upright in our intentions.

This maxim, strongly imprinted on my mind, and reduced, though rather too late, to practice, has given my conduct an appearance of folly and whimsicality, not only in public, but still more among my acquaintances. It has been said that I affected originality, and sought to act differently from others. The truth is I neither endeavoured to conform or be singular; I desired only to act virtuously, and avoid situations which, by setting my interest in opposition to that of another person, might inspire me with a secret though involuntary wish to his disadvantage.

Two years ago, my Lord Marshal would have put my name in his will, which I took every method to prevent, assuring him I would not for the world be conscious of my name being in the will of any person, much less in his. He gave up the idea; but insisted, in return, that I should accept an annuity on his life; this I consented to. It will be said, I find my account in the alteration; perhaps I may: but oh, my benefactor, my father! I am now sensible that, should I have the misfortune to survive you, I should have everything to lose, nothing to gain.

This, in my idea, is true philosophy, the only species consonant with the human heart; every day do I receive fresh conviction of its profound solidity. I have variously enforced it in all my later writings, but the multitude read too superficially to have noted it. If I survive my present undertaking, and am able to begin another, I mean, in a continuation of *Emile,* to give such a lively and striking example of this maxim as cannot fail to draw the reader's attention. But, having made reflections enough for a traveler, it is time to continue my journey.

It turned out more agreeable than I expected: my clownish conductor was not so morose as he appeared to be. He was a middle-aged man, wore his black grisly hair in a queue, had a martial air, a strong voice, a firm step, was tolerably cheerful, and, to make up for not having been taught any trade, could turn his hand to everyone. Having proposed to establish some kind of manufactory at Annecy,

he had consulted Madame de Warens, who immediately gave in to the project, and he was now going to Turin to lay the plan before the minister and get his approbation, for which journey he took good care to be well provided. This man had the art of ingratiating himself with the priests, whom he ever appeared eager to serve; he adopted a certain jargon which he had learned by frequenting their company, and thought himself a notable preacher; he could even repeat one passage from the Bible in Latin, and it answered his purpose as well as if he had known a thousand, for he repeated it a thousand times a day. He was seldom at a loss for money when he knew what purse contained it; yet was rather artful than knavish, and, when dealing out in an affected tone his unmeaning discourses, resembled Peter the Hermit, preaching the crusade with a sabre by his side.

I went on gaily with my pious guide and his restless companion, no sinister accident impeding our journey. I was in the happiest circumstances both of mind and body that I ever recollect having experienced; young, vigorous, full of health and security, placing confidence in myself and others; in that short but charming moment of human life when its expansive energy carries, if I may so express myself, our being to the utmost extent of our sensations, embellishing all nature with the charm of existence. My pleasing inquietudes became less wandering: I had now an object on which imagination could fix. I looked on myself as the work, the pupil, the friend, almost the lover, of Madame de Warens. The obliging things she had said; the caresses she had bestowed on me; the tender interest she seemed to take in me; those charming looks, which seemed replete with love, because they so powerfully inspired it, every consideration flattered my ideas during this journey, and furnished the most delicious reveries, which no doubt, no fear of my future condition arose to embitter. In sending me to Turin, I thought they undertook to find me an agreeable subsistence there. Thus eased of every care, I passed lightly on, while young desires, enchanting hopes, and brilliant prospects employed my mind; each object that presented itself seemed to ensure my approaching felicity.

I imagined that every house was filled with joyous festivity, the meadows resounded with sports and revelry, the rivers offered refreshing baths, fish wantoned in their streams, and how delightful was it to ramble along the flowery banks! The trees were loaded with the choicest fruits, while their shade offered voluptuous retreats to happy lovers; the mountains abounded with milk and cream; peace and leisure, simplicity and joy, mingled with the charm of going I knew not whither, and everything I saw carried to my heart some new cause for rapture. The grandeur, variety, and real beauty of the scene in some measure rendered the charm reasonable, in which vanity came in for its share. To go so young to Italy, view such an extent of country, and pursue the route of Hannibal over the Alps, appeared a glory beyond my age; add to all this our frequent and agreeable halts, with a good appetite and plenty to satisfy it; for in truth it was not worth while to be sparing at Monsieur Sabran's table; for what I ate could scarce be missed.

In the whole course of my life I cannot recollect an interval more perfectly exempt from care than the seven or eight days of our passing from Annecy to Turin. As we were obliged to walk Madame Sabran's pace, it rather appeared an agreeable stroll than a fatiguing journey. There still remains the most pleasing impression of it on my mind; and the idea of a pedestrian excursion, particularly among the mountains, has from this time seemed delightful. It was only in my happiest days that I traveled on foot, and ever with the most unbounded satisfaction; afterwards, occupied with business and encumbered with baggage, I was forced to act the gentleman and employ a carriage, where care, embarrassment, and restraint were sure to be my companions, and instead of being delighted with the journey, I only wished to arrive at my destination. I sought for a long time, at Paris, to meet with two companions of similar disposition, who would each agree to appropriate fifty louis of his funds and a year of his time to making the tour of Italy on foot, with no other attendance than a young fellow to carry our necessaries. I have met with many who seemed enchanted with the project, but, indeed,

considered it only as a mere castle in Spain, which served well enough to talk of, without any design of putting the scheme in execution. One day, speaking with enthusiasm of this project to Diderot and Grimm, they gave in to the proposal with such warmth that I thought the matter concluded on; but the proposal shrank to a journey on paper, in which Grimm thought nothing so pleasant as making Diderot commit a number of impieties, and shutting me up in the Inquisition for them, instead of him.

My regret at arriving so soon at Turin was tempered by the pleasure of viewing a large city, and the hope of figuring there in a conspicuous character, for my brain already began to be intoxicated with the fumes of ambition. My present situation appeared infinitely above that of an apprentice, and I was far from foreseeing how soon I should be much below it.

Before I proceed I ought to offer an excuse or justification to the reader for the great number of uninteresting particulars I am necessitated to repeat. In pursuance of the resolution I have formed to enter on this public exhibition of myself, it is necessary that nothing should bear the appearance of obscurity or concealment. I should be continually under the eye of the reader; he should be enabled to follow me in all the wanderings of my heart, through every intricacy of my adventures; he must find no void or chasm in my relation, nor lose sight of me an instant, lest he should find occasion to say, what was he doing at this time? and suspect me of not having dared to reveal the whole. I give sufficient scope to malignity in what I say, and it is unnecessary I should furnish still more by my silence.

My money was all gone, even that which I had secretly received from Madame de Warens. I had been so indiscreet as to divulge this secret, and my conductors had taken care to profit by it. Madame Sabran found means to deprive me of everything I had, even to a ribbon embroidered with silver, with which Madame de Warens had adorned the hilt of my sword. This I regretted more than all the rest. The sword itself would have gone the same way, had

I been less obstinately bent on retaining it. They had, it is true, supported me during the journey, but left me nothing at the end of it; and I arrived at Turin without money, clothes, or linen, being precisely in the situation to owe to my merit alone the whole honour of that fortune I was about to acquire. . . . All these ceremonies ended, at the very moment I flattered myself I should be plentifully provided for, they exhorted me to continue a good Christian, and live in obedience to the grace I had received; then wishing me good fortune, with rather more than twenty francs of small money in my pocket, the produce of the above-mentioned collection, they shut the door on me, and all was over.

Thus, in a moment, all my flattering expectations were at an end, and nothing remained from my interested conversion but the remembrance of having been both dupe and apostate. It is easy to imagine what a sudden revolution was produced in my ideas, when every brilliant expectation of advancement terminated by my seeing myself plunged in the completest misery. In the morning I was deliberating what palace I should inhabit; before night I was reduced to seek my lodging in the street. It may be supposed that I gave myself up to transports of despair, rendered more bitter by a consciousness that my own folly had reduced me to these extremities. Nothing of the sort: I had passed two months in absolute confinement: this was new to me; I was now emancipated, and the sentiment I felt most forcibly was joy at my recovered liberty. After a slavery which has appeared tedious, I was again master of my time and actions, in a great city, abundant in resources, crowded with people of fortune, to whom my merit and talents could not fail to recommend me. I had besides sufficient time before me to expect this good fortune, for my twenty francs seemed an inexhaustible treasure, which I might dispose of without rendering an account to any one. It was the first time I had found myself so rich; and, far from giving way to melancholy reflections, I only adopted other hopes, in which self-love was by no means a loser. Never did I feel so great a degree of confidence and security. I looked on my fortune as already made, and

was pleased to think that I was under obligation to no one save myself.

The first thing I did was to satisfy my curiosity by rambling all over the city, considering this as a confirmation of my liberty. I went to see the soldiers mount guard, and was delighted with their military music. I followed processions, and was pleased with the chanting of the priests. I next went to see the king's palace, which I approached with awe, but seeing others enter I followed their example, and no one hindered me. Perhaps I owed this favour to the small parcel I carried under my arm; be that as it may, I conceived a high opinion of my consequence from being within the gates, and already thought myself an inhabitant. The weather was hot; I had walked about till I was both fatigued and hungry. Wishing for some refreshment, I went into a milk-house; they brought me some cream-cheese, curds and whey, with two slices of that excellent Piedmontese bread which I prefer to any other; and for five or six sous I had one of the most delicious meals I ever recollect to have made.

It was time to seek a lodging. As I already knew enough of the Piedmontese language to make myself understood, this was a work of no great difficulty; and I had so much prudence that I wished to adapt it rather to the state of my purse than the bent of my inclination. In the course of my inquiries I was informed that a soldier's wife in the Rue du Po furnished lodgings to servants out of place at one sou a night, and finding one of her beds disengaged I took possession of it. She was young, and newly married, though she already had five or six children. Mother, children, and lodgers all slept in the same chamber, and it continued thus while I remained there. She was good-natured, swore like a carter, and wore neither cap nor kerchief; but she had a gentle heart, was very obliging, and to me both kind and serviceable.

For several days I gave myself up to the pleasures of independence and curiosity. I continued wandering about the city and its environs, examining every object that seemed curious or new; and, indeed, most things had that appearance to a novice who had never seen a capital. I

never omitted visiting the court, and assisted regularly every morning at the king's mass. I thought it a great honour to be in the same chapel with this prince and his retinue; but my passion for music, which now began to make its appearance, was a greater incentive than the splendour of the court, which, soon seen and always the same, loses its attraction. The King of Sardinia had at that time the best orchestra in Europe; Somis, Desjardins, and the Bezuzzis shone there alternately: all these were not necessary to fascinate a youth whom the sound of the most simple instrument, provided it was correctly played, transported with joy. Beyond this, magnificence only produced in me a stupid admiration, without any eagerness to partake of it; my thoughts were principally employed in observing whether any young princess was present who merited my homage, and whom I could make the heroine of a romance.

Meantime, I was on the point of beginning one; in a less elevated sphere, it is true, but where, could I have brought it to a conclusion, I should have found pleasures a thousand times more delicious.

Though I lived with the strictest economy, my purse insensibly grew lighter. This economy was, however, less the effect of prudence than a love of simplicity, which, even to this day, the frequenting of the most expensive tables has not been able to vitiate. Nothing, in my idea, either at that time or since, can exceed a rustic repast. Give me milk, vegetables, eggs, cheese, and brown bread, with tolerable wine, and I shall always think myself sumptuously regaled; a good appetite will furnish out the rest, when a *maitre d'hotel* and his lackeys cannot satiate me with their importunate attentions. Six or seven sous would then procure me a more agreeable meal than as many francs could have done since. I was abstemious, for want of a temptation to be otherwise; though I do not know but I am wrong to call this abstinence—to me it was the height of sensuousness. With my pears, new cheese, bread, and some glasses of Montferrat wine, which you might have cut with a knife, I was the happiest of epicures. Notwithstanding my expenses were very moderate, it was possible to see the end

of twenty francs. I was every day more convinced of this, and, spite of the giddiness of youth, my apprehensions for the future amounted almost to terror. All my castles in Spain were vanished, and I became sensible of the necessity of seeking some occupation that would procure me a subsistence. Even this was a work of difficulty. I thought of my former trade, but knew too little of it to be employed as a journeyman, nor do masters abound at Turin. I resolved, therefore, till something better presented itself, to go from shop to shop, offering to engrave ciphers, or coats of arms, on pieces of plate, and hoped to get employment by working at a low price, or taking what they chose to give me. Even this expedient did not answer my expectation; almost all my applications were ineffectual, the little I procured being hardly sufficient to produce a few scanty meals. However, walking one morning pretty early in the Contra Nova, I saw a young tradeswoman behind a counter, whose figure and looks were so charmingly attractive, that, notwithstanding my timidity with ladies, I entered the shop without hesitation, and offered my service as usual, and had the happiness to have it accepted. She did not repel me, but made me sit down and relate my little history; pitied my forlorn situation; bade me be cheerful, saying that if I were every good Christian would give me assistance; then (while she sent to a goldsmith's in the neighbourhood for some tools I had occasion for) she went into the kitchen and fetched me something for breakfast. This seemed a promising beginning, nor was what followed less flattering: she was satisfied with my work, and when I had a little recovered myself, still more with my discourse. She was rather elegantly dressed, and notwithstanding her gentle looks, this gay appearance had disconcerted me; but her good nature, the compassionate tone of her voice, with her gentle and caressing manner, soon set me at ease. I saw my endeavours to please were crowned with success, and this assurance made me succeed the more. Though an Italian, and too pretty to be entirely devoid of coquetry, she had so much modesty, and I so great a share of timidity, that our adventure was not likely to be brought to a very speedy conclusion, nor did they give us time to com-

plete it happily. I cannot recall the few short moments I passed with this woman without being sensible of an inexpressible charm, and can still say it was there that I tasted in perfection the most delightful as well as the purest pleasures of love. . .

By continuing to teach music I insensibly gained some knowledge of it. The life I led was sufficiently agreeable, and any reasonable man might have been satisfied, but my unsettled heart demanded something more. On Sundays, or whenever I had leisure, I wandered, sighing and thoughtful, about the adjoining fields and woods, and when once out of the city, never returned before night. One day being at Boudry, I went to dine at a cabaret, where I saw a man with a long beard, dressed in a violet-colored Greek habit, with a fur cap, and whose air and manner were rather noble. This person found some difficulty in making himself understood, speaking only an unintelligible jargon, which bore more resemblance to Italian than any other language. I understood almost all he said, and I was the only person present who could do so, for he was obliged to make his requests known to the landlord and others about him by signs. On my speaking a few words in Italian, which he perfectly understood, he got up and embraced me with rapture; a connection was soon formed, and from that moment I became his interpreter. His dinner was excellent, mine rather worse than indifferent; he gave me an invitation to dine with him, which I accepted without much ceremony. Drinking and chatting soon rendered us familiar, and by the end of the repast we had become inseparable. He informed me that he was a Greek prelate, and Archimandrite of Jerusalem; that he had undertaken to collect funds in Europe for the repairing of the Holy Sepulchre, and showed me some very fine patents from the czarina, the emperor, and several other sovereigns. He was tolerably content with what he had collected hitherto, though he had experienced inconceivable difficulties in Germany; for, not understanding a word of German, Latin or French, he had been obliged to have recourse to his Greek, Turkish, and Lingua Franca, which did not procure him much in the country he was traveling through; his proposal, there-

fore, to me was that I should accompany him in the quality of secretary and interpreter. In spite of my violet-colored coat, which accorded well enough with the proposed employment, he guessed from my ill-furnished appearance that I should easily be gained; and he was not mistaken. The bargain was soon made; I demanded nothing, and he promised liberally. Without security, without bond, without acquaintance, I gave myself up to his guidance, and next morning beheld me on my way to Jerusalem.

We began our expedition rather unsuccessfully by the canton of Fribourg. Episcopal dignity would not suffer him to play the beggar, or solicit help from private individuals; but we presented his commission to the Senate, who gave him a trifling sum. From thence we went to Berne, where we lodged at the Faucon, then a good inn, and frequented by respectable company, the public table being well supplied and numerously attended. I had fared indifferently so long that I was glad to make myself amends, therefore took care to profit by the present occasion. . . .

At Berne I was not useless to him, nor was my performance so bad as I had feared; I certainly spoke better and with more confidence than I could have done for myself. Matters were not conducted here with the same simplicity as at Fribourg; long and frequent conferences were necessary with the chiefs of the State, and the examination of his titles was not the work of a day; at length everything being adjusted, he was admitted to an audience by the Senate: I entered with him as interpreter, and was ordered to speak. Nothing was further from my expectation, for it never entered my mind that, after such long and frequent conferences with the members, it was necessary to address the assembly collectively, as if nothing had been said. Judge my embarrassment!—a man so bashful, to speak, not only in public, but before the Senate of Berne! to speak impromptu, without a single moment for recollection; it was enough to annihilate me. I was not even intimidated. I described succinctly and clearly the commission of the Archimandrite; extolled the piety of those princes who had contributed, and, to heighten that of their excellencies by emulation, added that less could not be expected

from their well-known munificence; then, endeavouring to prove that this good work was equally interesting to all Christians, without distinction of sect, I concluded by promising the benediction of Heaven to all those who took part in it. I will not say that my discourse was the cause of our success, but it was certainly well received; and, on our quitting, the Archimandrite was gratified by a considerable present, to which were added some very handsome compliments on the intelligence of his secretary; these I had the agreeable office of interpreting, but could not take courage to render literally. This was the only time in my life that I spoke in public, and before a sovereign; and the only time, perhaps, that I spoke boldly and well. What difference in the disposition of the same person! Three years ago, having been to see my old friend, Monsieur Roguin, at Yverdun, I received a deputation to thank me for some books I had presented to the library of that city. The Swiss are great speakers; these gentlemen, accordingly, made me a long harangue, which I thought myself obliged to answer, but so embarrassed myself in the attempt that my head became confused, I stopped short and was laughed at. Though naturally timid, I have sometimes acted with confidence in my youth, but never in my advanced age: the more I have seen of the world, the less I have been able to adopt its manners.

On leaving Berne we went to Soleure; the Archimandrite to re-enter Germany, and return through Hungary or Poland to his own country. This would have been a prodigious tour; but as the contents of his purse rather increased than diminished during his journey, he was in no haste to return. For me, who was almost as much pleased on horseback as on foot, I would have desired no better fate than to travel thus during my whole life; but it was pre-ordained that my journey should be shorter.

The first thing we did after our arrival at Soleure was to pay our respects to the French Ambassador there. Unfortunately for my bishop, this chanced to be the Marquis de Bonac, who had been Ambassador at the Porte, and consequently was acquainted with every particular relative to the Holy Sepulchre. The Archimandrite had an

audience that lasted about a quarter of an hour, to which I was not admitted, as the Ambassador understood the Lingua France, and spoke Italian at least as well as myself. On my Greek's departure I prepared to follow him, but was detained. It was now my turn. Having called myself a Parisian, as such I was under the jurisdiction of his excellency: he therefore asked me who I was, exhorting me to tell the truth. This I promised to do, but entreated a private audience, which was immediately granted. The Ambassador took me to his closet, and shut the door; there, throwing myself at his feet, I kept my word; nor should I have said less had I promised nothing, for a continual wish to unbosom myself puts my heart perpetually upon my lips. After having disclosed myself without reserve to the musician Lutold, I was not disposed to act the mysterious with the Marquis de Bonac, who was so well pleased with my little history, and the ingeniousness with which I had related it, that he led me by the hand to the Ambassadress, and presented me, with an abridgment of my recital. Madame de Bonac received me kindly, saying that I must not be suffered to follow that Greek monk. It was accordingly resolved that I should remain at their hotel till they saw what could be done for me. I wished to bid adieu to my poor Archimandrite, for whom I had conceived an attachment, but was not permitted. They sent him word that I was to be detained there, and in a quarter of an hour I saw my little bundle arrive. Monsieur de La Martiniere, secretary to the embassy, had in a manner the care of me. While following him to the chamber assigned to my use, he said, "This apartment was occupied under the Comte du Luc by a celebrated man of the same name as yourself; it is for you to succeed him in every respect, and cause it to be said hereafter, 'Rousseau the First, Rousseau the Second.'" This similarity, which I did not then expect, would have been less flattering to my wishes could I have foreseen at what price I should one day purchase the distinction. . . .

What I most regret is not having kept a journal of my travels, being conscious that a number of interesting details have slipped my memory; for never did I exist so com-

pletely, never live so thoroughly, never was so much myself, if I may so speak, as in those journeys made alone and on foot. Walking animates and enlivens my spirits; I can hardly think when in a state of inactivity; my body must be exercised to make my judgment active. The view of a fine country, a succession of agreeable prospects, a free air, a good appetite, and the health I gain by walking; the freedom of inns, and the distance from everything that can make me recollect the dependence of my situation, conspire to free my soul, and give boldness to my thoughts, throwing me, in a manner, into the immensity of things, where I combine, choose, and appropriate them to my fancy, without constraint or fear. I dispose of all nature as I please; my heart, wandering from object to object, approximates and unites with those that please it, is surrounded by charming images, and becomes intoxicated with delicious sensations. If, attempting to render these permanent, I amuse myself in forming a mental picture, what boldness of outline, what glow of colouring, what energy of expression, do I give them? It has been said that all these are to be found in my works, though written in the decline of life. Oh! had those of my early youth been seen, those made during my travels, composed, but never written! Why did I not write them? I may answer. Why deprive myself of the actual charm of my enjoyments to tell others what I enjoyed? What to me were readers, the public, or all the world, while I was mounting the empyrean? Besides, did I carry pens, paper, and ink with me? Had I made such provision, not a thought would have occurred worth preserving. I do not foresee when I shall have ideas; they come when they please, and not when I call for them; either they avoid me altogether, or, rushing in crowds, overwhelm me with their force and number. Ten volumes a day would not have sufficed; how then should I find time to write them? In stopping, I thought of nothing but a hearty dinner; on departing, of nothing but a charming walk; I felt that a new paradise awaited me at the door, and to attain it was my sole object.

Never did I experience this so feelingly as in the return journey I am now describing. In coming to Paris, I had

confined myself to ideas concerning the situation I expected to occupy there. I had rushed into the career I was about to run, and had made a pretty glorious progress, but it was not that that my heart adhered to. Some real beings obscured my imagined ones. Colonel Godard and his nephew could not keep pace with a hero of my disposition. Thank heaven, I was now delivered from all these obstacles, and could enter at pleasure into the wilderness of chimeras, for that alone remained before me, and I wandered in it so completely that I several times lost my way; but this was no misfortune. I would not have shortened it; for, feeling with regret, as I approached Lyons, that I must again return to the material world, I should have been glad never to have arrived there.

One day, among others, having purposely gone out of my way to take a nearer view of a spot that appeared delightful, I was so charmed with it, and wandered round it so often, that at length I completely lost myself, and after several hours' useless walking, weary, fainting with hunger and thirst, I entered a peasant's hut, which had not indeed a promising appearance, but was the only one I could discover near me. I thought it was here as at Geneva or in Switzerland, where the inhabitants, living at ease, have it in their power to exercise hospitality. I entreated the countryman to give me some dinner, offering to pay for it. He presented me with some skimmed milk and coarse barley bread, saying it was all he had. I drank the milk with pleasure, and ate the bread, chaff and all; but it was not very restorative to a man sinking with fatigue. The countryman, who watched me narrowly, judged the truth of my story by my appetite. Presently after—having said that he plainly saw I was an honest, good-natured young man, and did not come to betray him—he opened a little trap door by the side of his kitchen, went down, and returned a moment after with a good brown loaf of pure wheat, the remains of a good but rather highly flavoured ham, and a bottle of wine, the sight of which rejoiced my heart more than all the rest. He then prepared a good thick omelet, and I made such a dinner as none but a walking traveler ever enjoyed. When I again offered

to pay, his inquietude and fears returned. He not only would have no money, but refused it with the most evident emotion; and what made this scene more amusing, I could not imagine the motive of his fear. At length he pronounced tremblingly, those terrible words, "commissioners" and "cellar-rats," which he explained by giving me to understand that he concealed his wine because of the excise, and his bread on account of the tax imposed on it; adding he should be an undone man if it were suspected he was not almost perishing with want. What he said to me on this subject, of which I had not the smallest idea, made an impression on my mind that can never be effaced, sowing seeds of that inextinguishable hatred which has since grown up in my heart against the vexations these unhappy people suffer, and against their oppressors. This man, though in easy circumstances, dared not eat the bread gained by the sweat of his brow, and could only escape ruin by exhibiting an outward appearance of misery! I left his cottage with as much indignation as concern, deploring the fate of those beautiful countries, where Nature has been prodigal of her gifts, only that they may become the prey of barbarous exactors.

## From EMILE

By Jean Jacques Rousseau

### Concerning the Memory

Respect children, and be in no haste to judge their actions, good or evil. Let the exceptional cases show themselves such for some time before you adopt special methods of dealing with them. Let nature be long at work before you attempt to supplant her, lest you thwart her work. You say you know how precious time is, and do not wish to lose it. Do you not know that to employ it badly is to waste it still more, and that a child badly taught is farther from being wise than one not taught at all? You are troubled at seeing him spend his early years in doing nothing. What! is it nothing to be happy? Is it nothing to skip, to play, to run about all day long? Never in all his life will he be so busy as now. Plato, in that work of his considered so severe, the "Republic," would have children accustomed to festivals, games, songs, and pastimes; one would think he was satisfied with having carefully taught them how to enjoy themselves. And Seneca, speaking of the Roman youth of old, says, "They were always standing; nothing was taught them that they had to learn when seated." Were they of less account when they reached manhood? Have no fear, then, of this supposed idleness. What would you think of a man who, in order to use his whole life to the best advantage, would not sleep? You would say, "The man has no sense; he does not enjoy life, but robs himself of it. To avoid sleep, he rushes on his death." The two cases are parallel, for childhood is the slumber of reason.

Apparent quickness in learning is the ruin of children. We do not consider that this very quickness proves that they are learning nothing. Their smooth and polished brain reflects like a mirror the objects presented to it, but nothing abides there, nothing penetrates it. The child retains the words; the ideas are reflected; they who hear understand them, but he himself does not understand them at all.

Although memory and reason are two essentially different faculties, the one is never really developed without the other. Before the age of reason, the child receives not ideas, but images. There is this difference between the two, that images are only absolute representations of objects of sense, and ideas are notions of objects determined by their relations. An image may exist alone in the mind that represents it, but every idea supposes other ideas. When we imagine, we only see; when we conceive of things, we compare them. Our sensations are entirely passive, whereas all our perceptions or ideas spring from an active principle which judges.

I say then that children, incapable of judging, really have no memory. They retain sounds, shapes, sensations; but rarely ideas, and still more rarely the relations of ideas to one another. If this statement is apparently refuted by the objection that they learn some elements of geometry, it is not really true; that very fact confirms my statement. It shows that, far from knowing how to reason themselves, they cannot even keep in mind the reasonings of others. For if you investigate the method of these little geometricians, you discover at once that they have retained only the exact impression of the diagram and the words of the demonstration. Upon the least new objection they are puzzled. Their knowledge is only of the sensation; nothing has become the property of their understanding. Even their memory is rarely more perfect than their other faculties: for when grown they have nearly always to learn again as realities things whose names they learned in childhood.

However, I am far from thinking that children have no power of reasoning whatever. I observe, on the contrary, that in things they understand, things relating to their present and manifest interests, they reason extremely well. We are, however, liable to be misled as to their knowledge, attributing to them what they do not have, and making them reason about what they do not understand. Again, we make the mistake of calling their attention to considerations by which they are in no wise affected, such as their future interests, the happiness of their coming manhood,

the opinion people will have of them when they are grown up. Such speeches, addressed to minds entirely without foresight, are absolutely unmeaning. Now all the studies forced upon these poor unfortunates deal with things like this, utterly foreign to their minds. You may judge what attention such subjects are likely to receive.

### Result

Supposing that my method is indeed that of nature itself, and that I have made no mistakes in applying it, I have now conducted my pupil through the region of sensations to the boundaries of childish reason. The first step beyond should be that of a man. But before beginning this new career, let us for a moment cast our eyes over what we have just traversed. Every age and station in life has a perfection, a maturity, all its own. We often hear of a full-grown man; in contemplating a full-grown child we shall find more novelty, and perhaps no less pleasure.

The existence of finite beings is so barren and so limited that when we see only what is, it never stirs us to emotion. Real objects are adorned by the creations of fancy, and without this charm yield us but a barren satisfaction, extending no farther than to the organ that perceives them, and the heart is left cold. The earth, clad in the glories of autumn, displays a wealth which the wondering eye enjoys, but which arouses no feeling within us; it springs less from sentiment than from reflection. In spring the landscape is still almost bare; the forests yield no shade; the vendure is only beginning to bud; and yet the heart is deeply moved at the sight. We feel within us a new life, when we see nature thus revive; delightful images surround us; the companions of pleasure, gentle tears, ever ready to spring at the touch of tender feelings, brim our eyes. But upon the panorama of the vintage season, animated and pleasant though it be, we have no tears to bestow. Why is there this difference? It is because imagination joins to the sight of spring-time that of following seasons. To the tender buds the eye adds the flowers, the fruit, the shade, sometimes also the mysteries that may lie hid in them. Into a single point of time our fancy gathers all the year's seasons

yet to be, and sees things less as they really will be than as it would choose to have them. In autumn, on the contrary, there is nothing but bare reality. If we think of spring then, the thought of winter checks us, and beneath snow and hoar-frost the chilled imagination dies.

The charm we feel in looking upon a lovely childhood rather than upon the perfection of mature age, arises from the same source. If the sight of a man in his prime gives us like pleasure, it is when the memory of what he has done leads us to review his past life and bring up his younger days. If we think of him as he is, or as he will be in old age, the idea of declining nature destroys all our pleasure. There can be none in seeing a man rapidly drawing near the grave; the image of death is a blight upon everything.

But when I imagine a child of ten or twelve, sound, vigorous, well developed for his age, it gives me pleasure, whether on account of the present or of the future. I see him impetuous, sprightly, animated, free from anxiety or corroding care, living wholly in his own present, and enjoying a life full to overflowing. I foresee what he will be in later years, using the senses, the intellect, the bodily vigor, every day unfolding within him. When I think of him as a child, he delights me; when I think of him as a man, he delights me still more. His glowing pulses seem to warm my own; I feel his life within myself, and his sprightliness renews my youth. His form, his bearing, his countenance, manifest self-confidence and happiness. Health glows in his face; his firm step is a sign of bodily vigor. His complexion, still delicate, but not insipid, has in it no effeminate softness, for air and sun have already given him the honorable stamp of his sex. His still rounded muscles are beginning to show signs of growing expressiveness. His eyes, not yet lighted with fire of feeling, have all their natural serenity. Years of sorrow have never made them dim, nor have his cheeks been furrowed by unceasing tears. His quick but decided movements show the sprightliness of his age, and his sturdy independence; they bear testimony to the abundant physical exercise he has enjoyed. His bearing is frank and open, but not insolent or vain. His face, never glued to his books, is never downcast; you need

not tell him to raise his head, for neither fear nor shame has ever made it droop.

Make room for him among you, and examine him, gentlemen. Question him with all confidence, without fear of his troubling you with idle chatter or impertinent queries. Do not be afraid of his taking up all your time, or making it impossible for you to get rid of him. You need not expect brilliant speeches that I have taught him, but only the frank and simple truth without preparation, ornament, or vanity. When he tells you what he has been thinking or doing, he will speak of the evil as freely as of the good, not in the least embarrassed by its effect upon those who hear him. He will use words in all the simplicity of their original meaning.

We like to prophesy good of children, and are always sorry when a stream of nonsense comes to disappoint hopes aroused by some chance repartee. My pupil seldom awakens such hopes, and will never cause such regrets; for he never utters an unnecessary word, or wastes breath in babble to which he knows nobody will listen. If his ideas have a limited range, they are nevertheless clear. If he knows nothing by heart, he knows a great deal from experience. If he does not read ordinary books so well as other children, he reads the book of nature far better. His mind is in his brain, and not at his tongue's end. He has less memory than judgment. He can speak only one language, but he understands what he says; and if he does not say it as well as another, he can do things far better than they can.

He does not know the meaning of custom or routine. What he did yesterday does not in any wise affect his actions of today. He never follows a rigid formula, or gives way in the least to authority or to example. Everything he does and says is after the natural fashion of his age. Expect of him, therefore, no formal speeches or studied manners, but always the faithful expression of his own ideas, and a conduct arising from his own inclinations.

You will find he has a few moral ideas in relation to his own concerns, but in regard to men in general, none at all. Of what use would these last be to him, since a child is not

yet an active member of society? Speak to him of liberty, of property, even of things done by common consent, and he may understand you. He knows why his own things belong to him and those of another person do not, and beyond this he knows nothing. Speak to him of duty and obedience, and he will not know what you mean. Command him to do a thing, and he will not understand you. But tell him that if he will do you such and such a favor, you will do the same for him whenever you can, and he will readily oblige you; for he likes nothing better than to increase his power, and to lay you under obligations he knows to be inviolable. Perhaps, too, he enjoys being recognized as somebody and accounted worth something. But if this last be his motive, he has already left the path of nature, and you have not effectually closed the approaches to vanity.

If he needs help, he will ask it of the very first person he meets, be he monarch or man-servant; to him one man is as good as another.

By his manner of asking, you can see that he feels you do not owe him anything; he knows that what he asks is really a favor to him, which humanity will induce you to grant. His expressions are simple and laconic. His voice, his look, his gesture, are those of one equally accustomed to consent or to refusal. They show neither the cringing submission of a slave, nor the imperious tone of a master; but modest confidence in his fellow-creatures, and the noble and touching gentleness of one who is free, but sensitive and feeble, asking aid of another, also free, but powerful and kind. If you do what he asks, he does not thank you, but feels that he has laid himself under obligation. If you refuse, he will not complain or insist; he knows it would be of no use. He will not say, "I was refused," but "It was impossible." And, as has been already said, we do not often rebel against an acknowledged necessity.

Leave him at liberty and by himself, and without saying a word, watch what he does, and how he does it. Knowing perfectly well that he is free, he will do nothing from mere thoughtlessness, or just to show that he can do it; for is he not aware that he is always his own master? He is alert, nimble, and active; his movements have all the agility

of his years; but you will not see one that has not some definite aim. No matter what he may wish to do, he will never undertake what he cannot do, for he has tested his own strength, and knows exactly what it is. The means he uses are always adapted to the end sought, and he rarely does anything without being assured he will succeed in it. His eye will be attentive and critical, and he will not ask foolish questions about everything he sees. Before making any inquiries he will tire himself trying to find a thing out for himself. If he meets with unexpected difficulties, he will be less disturbed by them than another child, and less frightened if there is danger. As nothing has been done to arouse his still dormant imagination, he sees things only as they are, estimates danger accurately, and is always self-possessed. He has so often had to give way to necessity that he no longer rebels against it. Having borne its yoke ever since he was born, he is accustomed to it, and is ready for whatever may come.

Work and play are alike to him; his plays are his occupations, and he sees no difference between the two. He throws himself into everything with charming earnestness and freedom, which shows the bent of his mind and the range of his knowledge. Who does not enjoy seeing a pretty child of this age, with his bright expression of serene content, and laughing, open countenance, playing at the most serious things, or deeply occupied with the most frivolous amusements? He has reached the maturity of childhood, has lived a child's life, not gaining perfection at the cost of his happiness, but developing the one by means of the other.

While acquiring all the reasoning power possible to his age, he has been as happy and as free as his nature allowed. If the fatal scythe is to cut down in him the flower of our hopes, we shall not be obliged to lament at the same time his life and his death. Our grief will not be embittered by the recollection of the sorrows we have made him feel. We shall be able to say, "At least, he enjoyed his childhood; we robbed him of nothing that nature gave him.

In regard to this early education, the chief difficulty is, that only far-seeing men can understand it, and that a child

so carefully educated seems to an ordinary observer only a young scapegrace.

A tutor usually considers his own interests rather than those of his pupil. He devotes himself to proving that he loses no time and earns his salary. He teaches the child such accomplishments as can be readily exhibited when required, without regard to their usefulness or worthlessness, so long as they are showy. Without selecting or discerning, he charges the child's memory with a vast amount of rubbish. When the child is to be examined, the tutor makes him display his wares; and, after thus giving satisfaction, folds up his pack again, and goes his way.

My pupil is not so rich; he has no pack at all to display; he has nothing but himself. Now a child, like a man, cannot be seen all at once. What observer can at the first glance seize upon the child's peculiar traits? Such observers there are, but they are uncommon; and among a hundred thousand fathers you will not find one such.

## EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SALONS

THE diffusion of the printed page has undoubtedly increased the number of the well-informed; at the same time it has lessened the desire for intellectual conversation. The daily press moulds the minds of the generality of people and convenient monthlies and an ever-increasing supply of new books enable the reader to keep in touch with current thought. However, one who reviews the *Memoirs* of many a secondary writer of eighteenth century France is bound to feel that the world has lost something incomparably stimulating with the passing of the French *salon.* It would be impossible to consider French literature of this period without giving at least passing attention to those drawing-rooms wherein, it has been said, literature was spoken before it was written.

During the preceding century, due to the initiative of the Marquise de Rambouillet, for the first time writers met in social equality with the more cultivated *noblesse.* Latterly, the splendor of the "Sun-King" eclipsed the popularity of the *salon,* for not only was it impossible for others to compete with the glories of Versailles but Louis XIV resented any encroachment upon his scheme for making the Court the intellectual center of the kingdom. Under the regency private homes thronged once more with poets, playwrights, artists and the gifted generally who met in them the culture-loving public, now admitted to the *salons,* where the fate of a poem, the merit of a book just completed, were frequently determined.

There has probably never been a time in the world's history when conversation was more brilliant or scintillated with so much wit as in the half century before the great cataclysm. One of the less happy influences of these famous *salons,* so far as letters were concerned, was the inordinate demand for wit, with its corollary—fear of monotony. Because conversationalists aspired to give a piquant turn to even serious discussion and dismiss it with appropriate *bons mots,* it was inevitable that much of the

literary expression stimulated by these famous conversations should be superficial and trivial, truth and accuracy often being sacrificed for vivacity and humor. Satire and cynicism abounded, for the age was one of profligacy and moral laxity.

There is much that is elusive and fascinating about these remarkable women of France whose stately homes became the rendezvous of the intellectual, the gifted and clever. Often they were past middle life, seldom well educated, not always beautiful. But they were intuitive, tactful and quick at repartee—these queens of the *salons,* whose imprint upon their generation is still so plainly to be seen. Visitors from other lands were proud to be invited to their dinners and receptions which followed. Lord Chesterfield, a devotee of the *salon,* besought his son to embrace every opportunity so offered to "rub off the Cambridge rust" by associating with the cultured and the worldly wise. Galiani, the polished, unmoral Italian ambassador, despaired that Naples would ever become a "second Paris" unless some of the Parisian salonières might be induced to come to preside over similar conversational evenings where none would ever so much as think of cards.

It would be possible to span the century by means of these *salons,* beginning with the one established by the Marquise de Lambert, whose hall was called, with good reason, the "antechamber of the Academy," to revolutionary days, when Madame Roland vainly strove to aid the tottering Girondists and Madame Necker sought in vain to hold attention to purely intellectual themes, despite the precarious situation of the kingdom. Such a study would require much time and space. Suffice it to mention only the most renowned of these private halls which have given us the word *parlor,* from the French *parler,* to talk.

The Marquise de Lambert inherited certain of the traditions of the Hôtel de Rambouillet; the somewhat stilted and pedantic style of conversation, the formality and highly intellectual atmosphere. Her *salon* was frequented by the learned during the twenty years between 1710 and 1730.

It was to be expected that the company that gathered around Madame de Tencin, mistress of the regent—not to

mention others—would be more democratic and "free." It was in this *salon* that men first stood entirely on their merits, regardless of birth. In 1749, Madame Geoffrin fell heir to the *coterie* of Madame de Tencin, holding it together and increasing its numbers for a quarter of a century. She was born of the middle class—the bourgeois, and married a wealthy manufacturer of mirrors; consequently she did not draw the lines so strictly in preparing her lists as did the aristocratic Marquise du Deffand, who clung to classical traditions.

The trend of affairs is reflected in the *salons* of the last years before the revolution, when women of the middle class such as Madame Roland and Madame Necker were able to draw around them men of prominence and talent.

Many of the eighteenth century *salons* have no particular interest for us in this connection—such, for example, as the "Court of Sceaux," presided over by the Duchesse du Maine—where nobles and courtiers played as rustics, as shepherds and shepherdesses; to this vast estate none ever gained admittance unless he had the ability to contribute to the insatiable passion of the hostess for diversion and gaity. Voltaire sought refuge here on one occasion, when compelled to find immediate concealment, remaining for several weeks in retirement. It was at Sceaux that he wrote *Zadig* in a day and read it to an admiring audience at night. Consequently, even a home dedicated as exclusively as this to pleasure, had its literary following. But it is not of pleasure-seekers such as these of Sceaux that we think when recalling the influence of the *salon* upon French letters of the eighteenth century.

There is something appealing in the courage of the Marquise du Deffand who, realizing that her sight was failing, sought to mitigate the eternal darkness into which she must soon be plunged by gathering around her a little world of humanity; something fine in her tenderness for Horace Walpole, so many years her junior, and something heartless, if inevitable, in the rupture with Mlle. de Lespinasse, who carried away so many of her erstwhile friends to a new and more brilliant *salon.* All things considered, if study is limited to but one of these *solonières,* it is perhaps

most instructive to observe the career of Madame Geoffrin.

Marie Therese Rodet was born in 1699. Of her childhood we may judge by a letter written by her in mature years to Catherine II of Russia. Having been questioned as to her early training, she replied:

"I lost my father and mother when in the cradle. I was brought up by an old grandmother who had much intelligence and a sound head. She had very little education; but her mind was so bright, so adroit, so active, that it never failed her; it took the place of knowledge. She talked so agreeably of things she knew nothing about, that no one wished her to know more; and when her ignorance became too visible, she got away from it by jests that disconcerted the pedants who tried to humiliate her. She was so content with her lot that she considered knowledge a very useless thing for a woman. She used to say: 'I have done so well without it that I have never felt the need of it. If my granddaughter is stupid, knowledge will make her self-conceited and intolerable; if she has intelligence and sensibility, she will do as I have done; she will make up by cleverness and feeling for what she does not know; and when she comes to have more reason she will learn that for which she has the most aptitude, and learn it quickly.' So, in my childhood, she had me simply to read; but she made me read a great deal; she taught me to think and to reason; she taught me to know men, making me say what I thought, and telling me the judgment she formed upon them. She obliged me to give her an account of all my impulses and all my feelings; and these she corrected with such gentleness and grace that I never hid anything of what I thought and felt from her; my interior was as visible to her as my exterior. My education was continual."[1]

According to the custom of arranging "marriages of convenience" for girls of tender years, she was married before her fifteenth birthday to a man much older, dull so far as learning was concerned, but sufficiently astute to have amassed a fortune in business. His wealth enabled her to gratify her ambitions to surround herself with the refinements of life, such as fine paintings, sculpture and books and, above all, to entertain the gifted of the land.

Even when young, by dress, manner and temperament she gave the impression of being much older and it was her custom to mother the men who gathered around her board. Thus, Stanislas Augustus, the exiled king of Poland, addressed her as mother and she called him her son. The only time in her life when she left her home and country to travel was in 1766, after his restoration to the throne, when she journeyed to Warsaw to visit him. Her progress was interrupted by a visit to Vienna, where she was received by Marie Therese of Austria, and saw Marie Antoinette, who was then twelve years of age. Every honor was shown Madame Geoffrin in Poland, but she was thankful to return home, from which she was never absent even for a night save on this one occasion.

Year after year, each Monday evening found some group of artists assembled for one of Madame Geoffrin's dinners, the circle carefully composed to include men of conversational gifts and appreciation for art. Only one other woman was included for she said "several women at a dinner distract the guests, break up and scatter conversation."

Horace Walpole, Hume and Gibbon were among the distinguished Englishmen here to be met. Galiani was often in attendance; Grimm also and Fontenelle; Diderot and the encyclopædists and other intellectuals on Wednesday evenings when men of letters were dined, their numbers augmented at the reception following.

Madame Goeffrin tabooed all discussion of politics and religion at her board and whenever talk on any subject became too heated, her quiet "There, that is enough" served as oil on troubled waters, for it pleased guests and hostess alike that she rule with hard and fast rules. For those who liked the noisy, fevered arguments, there were places a-plenty where such might be found.

Being early left a widow with a large fortune, Madame Goeffrin never wearied of distributing money among the poor, a well-intentioned, if misconceived, method of alleviating the misery of a great city; she was quick to come to the aid of her friends and never happier than when sending some gift to make a studio or apartment more attrac-

Low Tide at Le Pornic, Brittany
Scene of Browning's "Legend of Pornic"

Cherbourg, a Port for Paris, in Northern Brittany

tive for one too devoted to the Muses to make ends meet.

It was Madame Goeffrin who reached out a neighborly hand to Madame Necker when she first came to Paris, so ambitious for her husband, so little at ease among the scornful who regarded her as a "new upstart."

It has been observed of Louis XIV that "he had only common sense but he had a great amount of it." Something similar might appropriately be said of this bourgeoise salonière. She had many an apt adage at hand, such as "It is economy which gives liberty and freedom," and bestowed any amount of reasonable advice upon her favorites. In this respect she is sometimes likened to Benjamin Franklin.

She had one daughter, so unlike herself that, she said, in thinking of her, she felt like a hen that had reared a duckling. This daughter was as devout as her mother was liberal, and during the mother's last illness she guarded her closely against all "atheists," as she termed the encyclopædists. This called forth a last sally from one who was never failing in apt replies: "Like Godfrey de Bouillon, my daughter would protect my tomb against the infidels." Seventy-eight years had taught her what life had to teach and who guarded her last hours concerned her little.

Julie de Lespinasse, whose life burned out at the age of forty—so feverishly had she lived in the emotions—was for some years the center of a philosophical group of admirers. She was undoubtedly the most highly educated of all these women who facilitated the exchange of ideas. Despite the handicap of limited means for entertainment, her charm of personality enabled her to hold a circle of devoted friends. Rousseau was one of her ideals, although abhorred by those of the old school as a promulgator of dangerous doctrines.

[1] Sainte-Beuve: *Madame Geoffrin.*

Sainte-Beuve's *Portraits of the Eighteenth Century* includes sketches of several of these Salonières. Several of the recent books on the subjects are based on this earlier writing.

## LOUIS XVI

THE fifteen years intervening between the death of Louis XV in 1774, and the outbreak of the French Revolution, in 1789, included much of importance outside the domain of finance; nevertheless, the condition of the treasury was so critical as to demand more than ordinary attention.

Louis XVI was twenty years of age when the death of his grandfather brought him to the throne of France. His wife, Marie Antoinette, the beautiful daughter of Marie Therese of Austria, was one year younger. Neither had received training in the least adequate for the duties which now came upon them and well might they fall to their knees, when word of the king's death reached them, with the cry: "God protect us! we are too young to reign!"

The spectacle which the dying monarch had presented in later life, with his harem and moral degeneracy, had been humiliating to the nation, which now turned in relief to the young sovereign whose private life offered a pleasing contrast. His severest critic must admit the good intentions of the new king and a genuine desire to practice economies and correct glaring abuses in French administration. However, his was a difficult place to fill and he had neither the natural qualities of mind nor the strength of will to organize a government. Marie Antoinette was frivolous, gay and eager to enjoy to the full the social round of court activities. The courtiers, most of whom were pensioned from the public treasury, were ill-disposed to countenance any changes which would contribute to their own discomfort. Members of his family and of the court were closest to the inexperienced king and it was natural that he should be influenced by them.

At first, the situation seemed auspicious. Despite the disgraceful spectacle which Louis XV had presented, not the slightest disposition was manifested to set aside the monarchy. Every Frenchman was bound by traditions of the past and even the most liberal thinkers wanted reforms

rather than a different form of government. An incumbent of the throne might forfeit the good opinion of the people but as for the monarchy itself, it was as dear to the hearts of the downtrodden peasantry as to the privileged orders.

Turgot was made minister of finance, and his appointment immediately strengthened the credit of the nation, for he had already become famous for reforms which he had instituted in Limousin. It is conceded on every hand that Turgot was a true financier, whose policies, had they been followed, might have brought order out of chaos and averted the dreadful calamity which presently overwhelmed the government. He declared himself opposed to loans, opposed to clearing the financial slate by means of bankruptcy—a measure which an earlier financial minister had declared unavoidable—and in favor of strict and far reaching economies.

The free distribution of products had been hampered in France by internal duties, which varied in different provinces. This worked serious hardships, especially in the sale of grain, which might be a drug on the market in one part of the country and unduly high elsewhere. Turgot abolished internal duty on grain and forbade its export when famine caused the price of bread to soar. This brought upon him the wrath of those who had profited under the earlier restrictions. Further, he swept away the hated corvée—enforced labor on highways and public works—requiring all labor to be compensated and replacing the old system by an evenly apportioned tax on each territorial district.

Such reforms, the first of many which he contemplated, together with the animosity aroused in the queen and courtiers by the continuous cry that expenditures must be curtailed, brought Turgot into such disfavor that in 1776 the king asked him to retire.

"With the dismissal of Turgot went the last real chance —though men knew it not—that the old monarchy could reform the country and itself without a cataclysm. From 1776 to 1789 all that the royal ministers could do was to try to stave off the inevitable."[1]

Necker was called to straighten out the tangled finances.

He was a Swiss banker, whose wealth and ability to cope with the mysteries of figures commended him to the prudent, at home and abroad. Necker was a financier, not a statesman. He did not, like Turgot, attempt to reform the government, but rather concerned himself in guarding the expenditure of such funds as came into the public treasury. He was able to negotiate loans and, at ruinous rates of interest, often did so.

It was during his administration that French sentiment was aroused to aid the colonies in America in their struggle with Great Britain. Theories which had been advanced by French philosophers seemed to be finding practical expression beyond the sea and enthusiasm for the colonists in their fight impelled La Fayette to organize forces and go to their assistance. As quickly as success for the revolt seemed likely, the French government hastened to recognize the new republic, eager to avenge humiliations which she had previously suffered at the hand of the English.

Regardless of the need in America for French aid, and of sympathy awakened in France for those who fought for freedom, the fact remained that France was unhappily situated to incur added indebtedness. To secure money Necker was obliged to make new loans, the mere payment of interest on which was to prove a heavy burden. Just before he retired he published the budget, something previously unheard of in France. It would be difficult to realize the intense anger of favorites whose pensions thus became known to the people generally.

Galonne presently followed Necker. His policy would have been wonderful had it admitted of proof. He held that in order to maintain credit, money should be freely spent. He encouraged the queen in her extravagances and for three years there came a respite in the fight for economy. It is said that a sum equalling nearly three hundred million dollars was borrowed during this short time. Suddenly the treasury was found to be empty and further loans impossible to obtain. Once again the nightmare of bankruptcy stared the government in the face while the fascinating theory that a man wishing to borrow must inspire confidence by his large expenditures dissolved in air.

The Archbishop of Brienne served for a few months as financial administrator; he is remembered for having announced that the king would assemble the States-General the following spring—in May, 1789. To tide over the intervening period, Louis XVI recalled Necker, who personally loaned the government a large sum, restoring confidence and making it possible to secure funds necessary to carry on the business of state.

One who recalls the meeting of the States-General in 1614 is bound to sense an increased boldness on the part of the third estate and to realize that, however desirable it might be to have the people participate in the government, the convocation of such an assembly under the circumstances must inevitably be attended with grave danger. As a matter of fact, it precipitated a revolution which swept aside the old régime.

It has been figured out in recent times that a comparatively small tax per capita would have enabled the French government of 1788 to have wiped out its indebtedness; consequently it is not enough, in accounting for the gravity of the situation, to point to the increasing deficit. The attitude of the people alone accounts for the crisis. Louis XIV had over-ruled parlement and forced it to register his edicts; his successor, Louis XV had allowed it little power in his latter years. Louis XVI desired to govern in an orderly fashion and restored the prestige of parlement, which soon refused to register new tax levies or necessary reforms. The privileged orders, the clergy and *noblesse,* opposed every attempt made to place upon them some legitimate portion of the public expense. It has been estimated that not more than one-third of all France was owned by the peasants while the other two-thirds were controlled by the clergy, the nobles and such of the bourgeois as had purchased freedom from taxation. Since parlement, the supreme judiciary of Paris, assumed an arbitrary stand and the privileged orders stood firmly against any radical changes, the opposition to added burdens on the part of the masses strengthened. Minister after minister had either been curtly dismissed for advocating measures repugnant to the privileged orders or had retired

in face of the hopeless predicament. The people, encouraged by the struggle between parlement and the crown, now refused to pay even such assessments as were customary. In view of a situation so critical it was generally believed that only a conference of all classes, represented by their delegates, could remedy the condition. The king and his advisors hoped that the Third Estate would consent to the imposition of a special tax and disband. Instead, they voted not to adjourn until they had given France a constitution.

[1] Davis: *History of France,* 237.
[2] See page .....

## ON THE EVE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

NOT long before the convocation of the States-General, a retiring minister reported to the king in words something like these: "France is a kingdom composed of separate states and countries, with mixed administrations, the provinces of which know nothing of each other, where certain districts are completely free from burdens the whole weight of which is borne by others; where the richest class is the most lightly taxed, where privilege has upset all equilibrium; where it is impossible to have any constant rule or common will; necessarily it is a most imperfect kingdom, very full of abuses, and in its present condition, impossible to govern."

It would be difficult to state the case more forcefully or with greater truth. Only by recalling the situation in the Middle Ages, when the French king was little more than "first among equals" is it possible to comprehend the numerous discrepancies that prevailed among the provinces. Once most of them had been all but independent of a king who was often weaker than their counts or dukes. By conquest, by different processes of amalgamation, they had been joined together into a kingdom; yet the old duties at the borders, the old feudal exactions and customs still survived. Exemption from certain forms of taxation had sometimes been a condition of the union.

By the latter part of the eighteenth century, the population of the country was approximately 25,000,000. The privileged orders—the clergy and *noblesse*—numbered perhaps, 1,500,000. Generally speaking, they controlled about two-thirds of the land while less than one-third was owned by peasants who tilled the soil. With a few exceptions, serfdom had been abolished, but since many of the peasants held their land directly from seigneurs, the feudal exactions of the Middle Ages had been perpetuated.

A certain number of days' work was required monthly by the seigneur; fees corresponding to rent were paid in kind; tolls were charged at fords and bridges. In by-gone

days, when the seigneur was a virtual ruler, he had conducted courts of justice in his territory. Those guilty of misdemeanors had been required to pay fees imposed by him. Theoretically, a portion of these fees went into the royal treasury but actually the rule was subject to flagrant infringement.

From the days of serfdom the custom continued of grinding the corn in the seigneur's mill—although it might be far away, with several streams to ford in order to reach it; similarly, the grapes must be pressed in the seigneur's press. Payment in kind was deducted in either case; likewise when bread was baked in the general oven.

The corvée compelled men to work without pay on the highways and they could be impressed for public work generally. Often the summons to work on the roads came when the crops were ready to harvest and delay frequently meant famine.

From mediæval times the exclusive right to fish and hunt had belonged to the lords. That their sport might not be diminished, the peasant was forbidden on penalty of death to kill the wild animals that destroyed his crops; nor had he redress when a party of gay nobles galloped through the grain in quest of the fleeing fox or rabbit. Further, the right of dove-cote was the lord's prerogative. This meant that flocks of pigeons might eat the tender crops as fast as they appeared above the ground. For disobeying the harsh laws which protected these favorite privileges of the *noblesse,* hundreds of peasants were consigned each year to the galleys or were hanged.

The clergy, comprising about 130,000 persons, commanded an annual income of 8,750,000 livres. The tithe or tenth was collected from parishioners for the Church. At their assembles, held every five years, the clergy often voted a free offering to the king but they maintained their right of exemption from taxation.

The *noblesse* paid little in the way of direct taxation. The *taille,* the direct property tax, was assessed to each district according to its assumed wealth. The moment the region gave indication of increased prosperity, the rate was increased. This naturally placed a premium upon shift-

lessness and poor tillage. As a matter of fact, not half of France was under cultivation and the arable land was exhausted, for nothing was done to replenish the soil. The peasant was not free to raise such crops as he preferred but was obliged to follow the instruction of the seigneur.

Although agriculture was in so decrepit a state, it was nevertheless the main industry. Trade was handicapped by provincial duties and manufacturers had reached no particular importance.

The *gabelle,* or salt tax, was in the nature of a monopoly. It was very unevenly apportioned, two-thirds of the entire tax being raised in one-third of the kingdom. Each province had its own rules for handling the *gabelle.* Throughout the northern and central parts of the country every person above seven years of age was required upon death penalty to purchase seven pounds of table salt annually. For curing meat or fish, another kind of salt was necessary, a certificate stating precisely for what purpose it might be used. In one district the cost of the commodity might be but a few francs per pound; for the same amount in the adjoining province it might be two or three livres. Officers were permitted to ransack houses at any time to discover smuggled salt.

To add to the general discomfort of the peasant, taxes as a rule were farmed; which is to say: the right to collect a tax would be sold to the highest bidder, who immediately turned over to the state the amount expected.

It frequently happened that the nobles, being hard pressed for money, would sell the right to administer justice on their estates to a farmer of taxes. Since his revenue would then be derived from fines imposed upon the hapless peasants, it is plain that justice was likely to be sadly perverted.

In no other country did the privileged class do so little for the state nor exact so many liberties. To engage in any kind of remunerative labor was beneath the dignity of the *noblesse,* who proudly traced back their ancestry for generations—often for centuries. These hereditary lords wore swords, indicative of their noble blood.

There had arisen in latter times the *noblesse of the*

*robe,** men of the wealthy bourgeoisie who had purchased offices under the government and, in consequence of generous gifts, had been ennobled by the king. The *noblesse* of the sword regarded the *noblesse* of the robe with contempt. However, these fortified themselves against future taxes by making a stipulated payment, thus augmenting the considerable number who were already free from regular assessment.

As a consequence, it has been computed that about three-fourths of a peasant's income was spent in taxes of one kind or another; when he was unable to pay, the roof was torn from his hut, the door removed and he was turned out to beg.

Foreigners visiting France during the years preceding the revolution commented upon the dire poverty which they observed in the country. There was nothing between the extravagance of the castle and the misery of the hut. Starvation stared the peasants in the face half of the time and they were often reduced to acorns and grass for food. They died in great numbers but no account was taken of their condition. Meanwhile the Court at Versailles danced its way to the very edge of a yawning chasm.

Under conditions such as these the announcement that the king would assemble the States-General was hailed with delight. Each class of society expected that in some way its desires would be met. The nobles trusted that such slight obligations as still rested upon them might be removed. The peasants thought that the millennium was at hand. None could foresee in what way the situation as it then existed was to be improved but each imagined that something remarkable would be forthcoming.

No one living remembered a meeting of the States-General. Not since 1614 had it been summoned. Louis XVI urged his subjects to search the archives for some record of the manner in which delegates had been chosen. It is true, some anxiety was felt by the ruler and his advisers as to the outcome of this expected gathering but no one, not even the most penetrating thinker, the shrewdest satirist or scoffer, anticipated anarchy or revolution. They stood too near the event to appraise it truly, either then or later.

It is only the modern reader who follows with misgiving the preliminaries to that celebrated meeting of May, 1789—destined to transform the fortunes of France and to exert untold influence upon the civilized world.

*Referring to the robe worn by judges and advocates. Many of these lately ennobled families were of the legal profession.

## THE STATES-GENERAL

THE winter of 1788-9 was a particularly severe one in western Europe. Rivers were frozen and the cold was so intense that the poor suffered desperately. Efforts were made by the queen and the wealthy of Paris to alleviate the dire misery, but what was done seemed infinitesimal in face of widespread wretchedness and want. The approaching meeting of the States-General was regarded as the only salvation of the nation. Necker finally announced the regulations to govern the election of delegates. The nobles and clergy would follow their usual custom but for the selection of commons, all taxpayers were permitted to vote. This naturally carried the discussion of public affairs into the remotest corners. Further, Necker announced, to the satisfaction of the Third Estate, that they might return as many delegates as those of *noblesse* and the clergy combined. The fact of the matter was that the king needed the aid of the commons against the privileged orders. The nobles and upper clergy expected the establishment of a constitutional government, aristocratic in character, under which their rights would remain unimpaired, the Third Estate hoped for nothing less than the entire sweeping away of social and political inequalities.

The first of May found hundreds of representatives arriving in Versailles. To keep the Third Estate in their humble place, the king had decreed that all delegates should wear the costume of 1614, the date of the last States-General. This meant that the *noblesse* and upper clergy would be arrayed in all their splendor, while the commons would be conspicuous in their somber black mantles. Nobles and bishops became very friendly to the lower classes just before the election, hoping to be chosen to transact the affairs of those of humble rank; but common elected common; curé elected curé.

Of the 1224 delegates chosen, about 624 were of the Third Estate; 300 of nobility, and the same number of clergymen. The commons had chosen at least two-thirds

of their delegates from those of legal profession. From the beginning, indications were not lacking that the Third Estate was to be remindful to keep its place, but these unmistakable slights gave the commons food for thought rather than resentment. For example, when the delegations were presented to the king, the nobles and clergy were ushered into his presence before the Third Estate; the same custom was carefully observed in seating them in the assembly hall. A public procession took place wherein royalty and the privileged orders were seen in rich regalia. Mass on Sunday was the occasion for another spectacular march to and from the church. Finally the day dawned for the official opening of the States-General.

A throne had been erected for Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, with the princes of the blood at hand; the clergy sat on one side, the *noblesse* on the other, while the Third Estate was placed at the further end of the hall. The king read a brief speech in which he expressed his good wishes for the conference; the keeper of the seals made an address; then Necker followed and consumed three hours in reading figures and explaining the financial straits of the state.

Six hundred representatives of the *Third Estate* listened in vain for any decisive answer to the questions absorbing them to the exclusion of all else; were the orders to meet separately, as in former times, or together? If separately, whatever they did would be undone by the clergy and *noblesse*. They were not interested in finding some temporary financial expedient but were determined to make radical changes which would make life more tolerable for their constituents. Necker's compliments of policy and complaints of an empty treasury became wearisome as the hours passed and pressing problems were left untouched.

"The burden of the song in each of the three addresses was the finances. We have spent all your money; tell us how to get more! We the privileged, we the lilies of the empire, who have neither toiled or spun, and who are now, as we have ever been, arrayed in a splendor rivalling Solomon's, confess to you that we have squandered in riotous living all the revenues which the old system can

wring out of France; we have piled up, mountain high, debts which menace the state with hideous bankruptcy, and we have called you here to tell us how to fill the treasury, and how to give new lease of life to the system which is so delightful to king, to priest, and to noble."[1]

As soon as Necker concluded, the royal party left the hall, followed by the *noblesse* and clergy. Members of the Third Estate realized that their only hope lay in assuming that the other orders would presently join with them for the reorganization of the government. They chose a chairman and proceeded to await the others, meanwhile holding informal discussions. Day after day went by. From May fifth, when the king had opened the meeting until the second week in June, overtures were made to the absent orders. At last it was plain that indefinite time might be wasted in this manner. The commons decided to send their final invitation to nobles and clergy to unite with them; they adopted the name *National Assembly* and stated the latest hour to which they would delay the business of the nation in further attempt to unite the delegates. Some of the lower clergy had been slowly filtering into the hall, for their interests were those of the Third Estate.

Indignation was heard from the nobles that the commons had been audacious enough to declare themselves the National Assembly. The following day the Third Estate found the hall in which they were accustomed to meet closed to them. Workmen occupied it, making ready, it was said, for a royal sitting. The rain was falling and the representatives were dismayed to find no quarters open to them. Someone suggested a sheltered tennis court and thither they went to take the famous Tennis Court Oath: not to disband until they had given France a constitution. A day or two of much excitement intervened ere the king held his royal session in which he announced to the assembled delegates his wish that each order meet separately except on such occasions as he might give permission for all three to confer together. After his withdrawal, followed by the privileged orders, a representative of the crown inquired of the Third Estate, silenced by the dismay the announcement had caused, whether or not they heard

the command to retire. Thereupon the towering form of Mirabeau rose to make the reply that thundered around the world:

"The commons of France have resolved to deliberate. We have heard the intentions which have been put into the king's mouth: you, sir, can never be his spokesman to the National Assembly; you have neither place, nor voice, nor right of speech. Go and tell your master that we are here by the will of the people, and will only be torn from our places by the force of bayonets." Instantly the entire body of delegates were shouting: "Such is the will of the assembly."

Louis XVI was a well-intentioned person; in private life he would have been exemplary. As head of a disrupted state he was valueless, for he lacked decision. Had he allied himself at the start with the Third Estate, he might have carried the nation with him, for the privileged orders numbered less than a twentieth of the whole population. As it was, disorder had increased during the wasted weeks. Riots were becoming frequent in the provinces. Paris was teeming with unrest; mobs of hungry people thronged the streets and awaited news brought hourly from Versailles, eight or ten miles away. The king was wearied with the attention he had already given to the affairs of state, begrudging all time spent away from the chase; so, when his messenger appeared with word that the commons would not leave the hall, he is said to have answered petulantly: "Let them stay there then." Two or three days later he requested the nobles and clergy to join the Third Estate.

Queen Marie Antoinette was most unpopular. She had been married to Louis XVI to seal a compact with Austria, the traditional foe of France, during the reign of Madame de Pompadour. More sinned against than sinning, her actions were often misinterpreted. Her extravagances gave her the popular nickname, Madame Deficit, often murmured too audibly when she appeared in public. The police had to warn her against appearing at the theatres of Paris, for they felt powerless to protect her from insult. Thomas Jefferson and Gouverneur Morris, ambassadors to France

from the United States in these trying days, commented at the lack of cheers and applause for her during the preliminary demonstrations of the States-General, in early May.

The queen was highly incensed at the course events were taking. She distrusted Necker and felt that Louis XVI should disperse the Third Estate with soldiery rather than permit the commons to triumph as they had done. Nevertheless, the treasury still revealed a yawning cavity. It was idle to adjourn the delegates until that evil had been remedied. The king was sufficiently lacking in discernment and sound judgment; it was a thousand pities that the advice of the queen and his brothers should have been such as to befog his vision still more.

The massing of troops, Swiss and German mercenaries, disturbed the National Assembly, for the leaders of the commons well knew that in case of defeat, their actions might be deemed treasonable. They therefore petitioned the king to withdraw the troops—which he frankly refused to do. Moreover, on the eleventh of July, announcement was made that Necker had been dismissed and exiled. This greatly incensed the populace, for it was believed—rightly or wrongly—that this banker of Geneva was the only one who could save the state from bankruptcy. Mirabeau's father died just at this time and although these two members of an ancient line had gotten on very badly in life, there had been a bond of pride and affection between them. Mirabeau was the one man who had the force and foresight to control the situation, and he was absent during the days immediately following the downfall of Necker. On the thirteenth of July the shops of Paris were looted for weapons and powder. It was feared that the king's mercenaries from Versailles might at any moment appear to scatter the mobs that thronged the streets. The next day, the fourteenth—today the national holiday of France, as the Fourth of July is the national holiday in the United States—the mobs turned toward the Bastile, an old fortress prison, took possession of it, beheaded its aged governor, paraded his head on an iron pike and marched through the public squares.

The Fall of the Bastile holds a place in the French Revolution comparable to the firing of Fort Sumpter in the Civil War of 1861. Both incidents, trivial in themselves, indicated that a struggle had begun.

As a matter of fact, the Bastile was practically empty of political prisoners—only seven being then confined in it. The governor drew on the city of Paris daily for his supplies and by no means could he have undergone a siege. It was taken with no difficulty and its capture was unimportant save in this: it was a symbol of the old régime, under which, by means of *lettres de cachet,* or sealed letters from the king, men could be cast into prison and held there for years together without trial or definite charge being lodged against them. Among the prisoners was found a man who had no recollection of how long he had been there, for what reason incarcerated, nor were there records to illuminate his case.

If ever a country needed a strong centralized control it was France at that moment. Signs of anarchy were appearing in various parts of the kingdom. The criminal, the depraved, the outcasts and the disturbing element that in any country, at any time, merely awaits the relaxation of authority to gain the ascendency, stood ready to put an end to order. But the king pursued his dallying and the National Assembly gave itself over to framing a constitution for a country which possessed such irregularities that its problems were unnumbered. As a matter of fact, they were to spend two years in this way, only to find eventually that, however plausible their political scheme might appear on paper, many of its provisions were impractical in operation.

News traveled more slowly then than now. Rumors abounded but not until the lapse of some days did the country regions know that the Bastile had fallen. Then the rioting, which previously had been local and spasmodic, became serious. Castles were burned, tax collectors were killed, deeds and papers recording feudal obligations were destroyed. By the first of August the situation was alarming. The first émigrés had passed over the borders seeking safety—and ignominy—abroad.

"Bastiles in other parts of the kingdom followed the fate of that in Paris. They were stormed and taken, or they were voluntarily surrendered.

"From state prisons the tempest turned upon the castles of the lords. What peasant did not hate the chateau? Its grandeur had cowed him for ages. Its wealth had mocked him. Its strength had oppressed him. Its dungeons had held him in chains, deep down under the ground, where the toads and noxious reptiles bore him company, and where the cold, damp walls dripped upon him as he rotted away in helpless solitude. Up there in the tower was the dreaded muniment room—the place which held the parchment, the court rolls, the various papers which preserved the record of feudal dues and feudal titles. The peasant had seen these musty parchments drawn out of their chests a thousand times to prove some claim of the lord against the vassal, to fasten some rusty old feudal chain upon the limb of the peasant who was looking upward to the freedom of manhood. These towers were at the top of the castle, the dungeon at the bottom; between the two dwelt a family, which had lived at the expense of the peasant, had outraged every feeling of the peasant, had lashed him, like a dog, with its whips, had cut him yet more keenly with its scorn and contempt; which had ridden over his little field a thousand times, tramping his harvest into the mire; which had met him at every turn of the market with fees, at every road-gate with fees, at every bridge with fees; which had torn away his son to suffer and die in the ill-paid army, and his daughter to live in shame, and die in neglect as the concubine of some dandy debauchee. Who can doubt that the peasant hated the castle with unspeakable hatred? Who can wonder that, in the first intoxication of freedom, he should wreak his vengeance upon it?

"Fire, fire blazes all over France. The castles are wrapped in flames; the lord flees for his life; his wife and children shriek for mercy, and escape almost naked from the furious peasants. Not always does the lord succeed in getting off unhurt; not always his wife and children. Too often, too horribly often, the lord is slain on his threshold, and his family outraged and slaughtered. Sometimes the

castle is spared; sometimes there is humanity for women and children; but the muniment room is sacked always. The feudal parchments, court rolls, titles, and all are ruthlessly destroyed."[3]

Reports of the disorders everywhere prevalent were made before the National Assembly, whose meetings were not subject to such order and regulation as govern the legislative bodies of today. Pandemonium ruled much of the time. Hundreds of visitors swarmed in the galleries, applauding or hooting the sentiments of speakers. It was necessary to raise one's voice above the noise to be heard and the president's bell made no impression on the confusion. Mirabeau alone could quell this representative assembly of the nation into awed silence, his powerful voice playing upon the emotions as upon the strings of a harp.

The composition of this famous body of law-makers is worthy of attention. On the extreme right sat the reactionaries: members of the clergy and nobility who desired everything to remain as it had been. The right center comprised the majority of the privileged orders, who were in favor of moderate changes. The left center embraced the majority of the Third Estate, who were determined to see an end of privilege but who had no thought of changing the government from that of a monarchy. They wished it to be a constitutional monarchy with equal laws and opportunities for all. Finally, there was the extreme left, whose members were few at first but destined to swell. They wanted the monarchy swept away and a new form of government set up. However, they were theorists and had no expectation of attaining any such result. From right to left, then, in modern parlance, we might call the four groups of widely differing sizes, the reactionaries, the conservatives, the liberals and the radicals.

On the night of August fourth occurred one of those remarkable demonstrations which are only possible among the Latins. The National Assembly had listened to distressing accounts of lawlessness which threatened the very existence of the government. A noble of slight influence declared the fault really lay with privilege instead of with the foolish people who were but trying to solve their trou-

bles by blindly destroying whatever they could lay their hands upon. He proposed the relinquishment of some of the feudal rights. He was followed by a noble of wide influence and power; then the meeting took fire. Mirabeau, who was absent that evening, afterwards characterized it as an "electric storm." One noble after another contributed to the mass of rights which went by the board: feudal dues, the corvée, the right of the hunt, of the dovecote, the special exemptions of this town and that province —every right the members possessed and some they did not have, were tossed on the heap, like ornaments of Savonarola's pile of vanities in Florence of the Middle Ages. Even the phlegmatic caught the spirit of the night, whose hours passed unheeded, as the old order was swept out to sea without a thought as to what would be substituted for the discarded system. Noble vied with noble under the spell of the delirium.

It was not to be expected that nobles and the higher clergy, scattered throughout the land would prove to be in sympathy with the "renunciation of privileges" which went on during the night of the "orgy." In the sober light of day it was possible to see that those who had destroyed had set nothing in place of the old order. The people everywhere rejoiced that henceforward none would be compelled to pay taxes while at the same time the state hung on the verge of financial ruin.

Riots abated for a little as the people watched the doings at Versailles. In Paris the arrival of every rider with news from the assembly was breathlessly awaited. Autumn approached with its chill, prophetic of winter, and the patience of those who had expected the miraculous presently gave way. On the fifth of October a host of fishwomen and the disreputable of the great city, desperate with want, set out on a march to Versailles to ask the National Assembly for bread. "Less talk and more bread" was the cry they raised, as they came, wearied, wet and mud-stained, before the legislative hall. Persuaded by the perplexed president that they could find no bread there, they pressed on to the royal palace. As usual, Louis XVI was utterly incapable of coping with an emergency. Had an effort been made

to feed the famished horde and send the women back to the city, much trouble might have been averted. As it was, only the timely arrival of La Fayette with his troops gave protection to the royal family; even so, Marie Antoinette fled none too soon from her suite ere her bed was riddled by spears carried by fishwomen of Paris. Now the cry arose that the king must go to Paris and, always yielding in the face of danger, he and the royal family left Versailles for the Tuileries—an old palace in Paris. Thousands of rioters marched by the side of the coach, singing: "We are bringing the baker, the baker's wife and the baker's son to Paris." It was characteristic of the proud Austrian queen that she commented with contempt on the fact that the man on the side of her coach was not in uniform. She was still in her twenties and had known honor, gaiety, grief in the loss of her eldest son, and dishonor at the hands of her subjects; she was never again to see the comforts of Versailles and her hair was to whiten in a prison ere the end came, but a few years later.

It is impossible to fix arbitrary dates in history but if at any time before his death the reign of Louis XVI may be said to have terminated, it was on this sixth day of October when, protected by the guards of La Fayette, accompanied by the disorderly women of the cankerous portion of Paris, he rode to the Tuileries, soon to be a prisoner whose liberties would be more and more curtailed.

[1] Watson: *Story of France,* II, 193.
[2] Ibid., 268.

THE assembly followed the king to Paris. It was not easy to find accommodations for so large a body but as soon as possible a riding academy, once the drill ground for the Bourbon princes, was prepared for them. Its proximity to the Tuileries, of which it had once been a part, made it desirable for the legislators. Due to the structure of the hall, the delegates could no longer retain their former locations and they presently came to be known by such names as the *Plain,* the *Mountain,* and the like—the *Plain* being members seated in the level portion of the room, in front of the president; the *Mountain,* those seated in tiers that rose, one above the other.

There were reasons why Paris felt safer with royalty and the assembly quartered there. In the first place, many notables and certain of the princes were already established in towns of Germany and the Netherlands, where they were attempting to raise armies to invade France, to re-establish the old order of government. On the other hand, there were serious objections to having those engaged in framing a constitution domiciled in the midst of a great municipality where public feeling ran high and mobs were quickly incited to violence. The assembly found itself intermediary: on one side a king who yielded with reluctance to what he felt powerless to prevent; on the other, mobs who turned from one agitator to another with impartiality. On the fifth of October they had seized a defenseless and well-intentioned cleric who happened to appear on the street before them. He would have been hung to the nearest lamp-post had not a self-possessed citizen called the attention of the rioters to Versailles as the proper place to seek bread. Instantly their first project was abandoned and a new one espoused. On such slender threads did human life rest in revolutionary days.

In the early life of the National Assembly some of the radicals, unable to speak as openly as they wished in the joint meetings, had obtained quarters once occupied by

monks popularly known as Jacobins, from the fact that theirs was the Church of St. Jacques. These delegates chose a name which was too long to suit the impassioned speech of the time and their debating society soon came to be known as the Jacobin club; its members as Jacobins. Incidentally, certain other names which are sometimes confusing in histories of this prolonged struggle were as accidental as this.

Long before talk of abolishing the monarchy was openly heard, such a measure was argued by the Jacobin club and every important question to be fought out in the National Assembly was threshed out first by its members. Following the example of Paris, similar clubs sprang up in all parts of France. Thus, at a time when the central authority was weakening and confusion becoming the order of the day, the radicals were establishing a net-work of organizations throughout the land, each in close touch with the parent society in Paris.

The lower clergy had stood solidly with the commons until the assembly voted to confiscate the property of the Church, this to be offered for sale to relieve the treasury. Monasteries and convents were closed, temporary provision being made for the inmates. Computing the value of this land thrown on the market at many million livres, it was used as security for an issue of paper money; the notes were given a valuation of forty-four livres and called *assignats*. It was to be expected that a measure as arbitrary as the seizure of the Church property would inevitably stir up deep resentment. The incumbents of benefices were dismissed and new ones installed according to a new system, making clerics answerable to the state; an act that was bound to invoke the wrath of Rome. The clergy threatened civil war; uprisings occurred in numerous places and the churchmen largely abandoned the cause of the revolution, to throw their support with the reactionary elements.

When the king had stubbornly refused to send the army away from Paris and Versailles, despite the report of a committee that the people needed the food supplies required at the barracks, those in sympathy with the National Assembly and opposed to the old régime had called upon

the nation to rally to the defense of the revolution. The so-called National Guards came into existence almost over night in Paris and a similar military guard was formed in every town and hamlet. This was easily accomplished by converting the earlier militia into National Guard. Such order as longer existed was due in the main to the protection of this military order which attempted to hold in check the lawless. Its sympathy was usually with the revolution and, having been organized to prevent the quashing of the assembly and its measures, it sometimes became the channel for revolutionary action. Its part was so prominent for several years that it can scarcely be overemphasized.

With the assembly at work upon the constitution, the National Guards trying to preserve the peace, the Jacobin clubs joining the rural communities to the pulsing city for the purpose of inflaming the people, 1789 drew to an end and a new year dawned.

On the fourth of February, with such grace as he could command, Louis XVI went to the assembly hall, commended the delegates on the reforms they were inaugurating and so delighted those who wanted to set up a limited monarchy that the assembly escorted him back to the Tuileries, crying "Long live the king!" "Long live the queen!" Marie Antoinette exhibited the Dauphin and said: "I shall teach him to cherish liberty."

As the first anniversary of the Fall of the Bastile approached, great preparation was made to celebrate the memorable event. Delegates were sent from every town and province. About thirty days earlier, the assembly had abolished all titles of nobility and rank; consequently a great nation rejoiced in its newly acquired "equality." So eager were the people to emphasize this leveling of society, that they caught up the name "deputies of the human race" as sufficiently distinguishing for those who were to represent the country at the capital on this joyous occasion. Despite the fall of rain, thousands of people camped on the *Champs de Mars* and more than three hundred thousand witnessed the king and deputies take the oath to support the constitution, on July 14th. Intoxicated with

excitement, the people danced on the site of the former Bastile. It is impossible to follow the conduct of Louis XVI thenceforth without being reminded of Charles I. Both paved the way for their tragic ends; both promised fairly enough but with little intention of abiding by their plighted word. The wives of both proved to be the worst possible counsellors men could have in dire extremity. Marie Antoinette was a far more gifted woman than Henrietta Maria, but both queens were imperious and unwilling to relinquish the prerogatives and pride of absolute rulers. It is probable that Louis XVI had moments when he acquiesced in measures he could not well alter, but within his mind was always the hope that sooner or later this frenzy which seemed so to possess the people would abate and matters would revert to their "normal" condition.

Encouraged by the example of the French, subjects of German and Austrian princes along the borders and in Belgium began to refuse their feudal dues. When these princes asked permission of Louis XVI to pass through French outposts en route to coerce them, he readily gave it. When this reached the ears of the delegates in the assembly they straightway forbade such procedure and mobilized an army to prevent it. Radicals who had ceased to put their faith in kings no longer talked in whispers, but publicly said that the worst enemy of France was within the gates.

The framing of the Declaration of Rights had absorbed the assembly for some time after that feverish August night when, carried away by the momentary generosity of his neighbors, one noble after another relinquished his rights. Mirabeau, who at all times saw matters as they were, vainly suggested that when disorders enfolded the country and the state was bankrupt, it would be more becoming for men to speak of their duties than of their rights; but his words did not deter those whose one anxiety it was "to make a declaration for all men, for all times, for every country, that will be an example to the whole world." Well might representatives of the new republic across the sea smile as they heard such sentiments: for both their country and Switzerland had already found a way to freedom. Malouet, having in mind the limitation of franchise which

the new constitution had already established, asked pertinently: "Why should we carry men up to the top of a mountain and thence show them the full extent of their rights, since we are forced to make them descend again, and assign them limits, and cast them back into the world as it is, in which they will come on boundary-marks at every step?"

The *Declaration of Rights* contained seventeen articles,* the first being that men are born equal and should have equal rights. The constitution, which was completed in the autumn of 1891, granted the franchise to all citizens who paid taxes equal or exceeding the value of three days' labor. Such were to be known as *active* citizens; those failing to contribute to the public support were called *passive* citizens. Since these last numbered upwards of a hundred thousand people, here was a portion of the population upon whose emotions the demagogues were to play with telling success. Non-property holders, in some instances, went so far as to petition the assembly that if payment of taxes was to be the qualification of active citizenship, to provide a way by which they might pay a tax; but to no avail.

That the framers of the *Declaration of Rights* had the best intentions there can be no doubt. That they were theorists is equally true.

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had been bitterly opposed to Mirabeau, the one member of the National Assembly who might have helped them to ally themselves with the revolution. His statesmanlike qualities were recognized only when death removed him in April, 1791. The king then protested that he had lost a friend. The predicament of the royal family was indeed unhappy. La Fayette, commander of the National Guards, was delegated to guard the Tuileries. The clergy were being forced to take an oath to support the constitution or leave the country and it was well understood that the king opposed such a measure. His carriage was turned back when he attempted to go to the royal palace at St. Cloud to hear mass said by a non-conforming priest. Louis XVI was very pious and he was made miserable by a papal bull denouncing all who deprived the Church of its property.

Marie Antoinette expected that her brother, the Emperor of Austria, would come to her rescue. Consequently she had refused such intercession as Mirabeau offered to make in behalf of the royal family, awaiting the arrival of an army that never reached Paris. Finally, the situation at the Tuileries being deemed insufferable, a flight was planned by the king and queen. Arrangements were made and the royal family slipped away under cover of the night of June 20, 1791. One can but wish that their lumbering old coach had been able to reach the border and so prevent the tragic deaths which were destined to befall them; for they were victims of a system into which they had been born and which they were incapable of recasting. The story is too well known to need rehearsing. The king, too sure of his safety, reached his head out of the coach, was recognized by a provincial who saw his resemblance to the image on the coin of the realm and gave warning. A few days later the family returned under guard to the Tuileries, thenceforth to be little more than prisoners, insulted and assailed by the vile tongues of the rough element as they rode along.

It was not alone the fact that the king had left the city which sealed his doom; but, to make clear his position, he had left a document wherein he committed himself to being out of harmony with the constitution and not bound by the transactions of the assembly. This was conclusive proof that he could not be depended upon to carry out the provisions of the new government.

Yet the situation was a peculiar one. Were the assembly to declare the monarch deposed, their constitution, which was nearly finished, would be of no avail; for it presupposed a king upon the throne and there was none other to fill the rôle. The Duke of Orleans, cousin to the reigning sovereign, had done everything possible to discredit Louis XVI and obtain the crown; but his character was such that no enthusiasm was manifested for him. Neither were the king's brothers considered, for they had betaken themselves to safety in foreign lands. So the discredited ruler was permitted to remain the nominal head of the nation and, when the assembly had concluded its work, he accepted the new constitution and dissolved it. The next day the legis-

lative assembly, for which the constitution provided, convened.

The new constitution eliminated the old provinces as political divisions and divided France into eighty-three departments; these were further divided and finally the communes were left as before. The department, the canton, and the commune were each provided with an elective executive and council. The old courts were abolished and new ones established. Various provisions of the new order had been set into operation as rapidly as they had been determined upon, so that the day following the dissolution of the constitutional assembly the new legislative body came at once into being. But the entire legal instrument which it had taken two years to create was artificial and in many respects impractical. For example, the king, the chief executive, was not allowed to choose his ministry from the assembly; he and his ministers formed one department; the legislators an entirely distinct body and, as matters then stood, a deepening gulf between the two might easily bring about a deadlock. Unfortunately and against the wise counsel of Mirabeau, a rule had been made that no member of the first assembly could be elected to the Legislative Assembly nor serve in the ministry for a given number of years. This meant the formation of a wholly new and inexperienced body of 750 representatives, unwieldy in number and untrained in legislative duties, who must begin their work with scarcely more confidence than delegates to the States-General had possessed in 1789. It was not strange that Gouverneur Morris exclaimed, upon examining the completed instrument of government, "The Almighty himself could not make it work unless he created a new type of human beings."

*See page 261.

## DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN*

THE representatives of the French people, organized in National Assembly, considering that ignorance, forgetfulness or contempt of the rights of man, are the sole causes of the public miseries and of the corruption of governments, have resolved to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man, in order that this declaration, being ever-present to all the members of the social body, may unceasingly remind them of their rights and their duties; in order that the acts of the legislative power and those of the executive power may be each moment compared with the aim of every political institution and thereby may be more respected; and in order that the demands of the citizens, grounded henceforth upon simple and incontestable principles, may always take the direction of maintaining the constitution and the welfare of all.

In consequence, the National Assembly recognizes and declares, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being, the following rights of man and citizen.

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinction can be based only upon public utility.

2. The aim of every political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man. These rights are liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression.

3. The source of all sovereignity is essentially in the nation; no body, no individual can exercise authority that does not proceed from it in plain terms.

4. Liberty consists in the power to do anything that does not injure others; accordingly, the exercise of the natural rights of each man has no limits except those that secure to the other members of society the enjoyment of these same rights. These limits can be determined only by law.

5. The law has the right to forbid only such actions as are injurious to society. Nothing can be forbidden that is

not interdicted by the law, and no one can be constrained to do that which it does not order.

6. Law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to take part personally, or by their representatives, in its formation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes. All citizens being equal in its eyes, are equally eligible to all public dignities, places, and employments, according to their capacities, and without other distinction than that of their virtues and their talents.

7. No man can be accused, arrested, or detained, except in the cases determined by the law and according to the forms that it has prescribed. Those who procure, expedite, execute, or cause to be executed arbitrary orders ought to be punished: but every citizen summoned or seized in virtue of the law ought to render instant obedience; he makes himself guilty by resistance.

8. The law ought to establish only penalties that are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one can be punished except in virtue of a law established and promulgated prior to the offense and legally applied.

9. Every man being presumed innocent until he has been pronounced guilty, if it is thought indispensable to arrest him, all severity that may not be necessary to secure his person ought to be strictly suppressed by law.

10. No one should be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious, provided their manifestation does not derange the public order established by law.

11. The free communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man; every citizen then can freely speak, write, and print, subject to responsibility for the abuse of this freedom in the cases determined by law.

12. The guarantee of the rights of man and citizen requires a public force; this force then is instituted for the advantage of all and not for the personal benefit of those to whom it is entrusted.

13. For the maintenance of the public force and for the expenses of administration a general tax is indispensable; it ought to be equally apportioned among all the citizens according to their means.

14. All the citizens have the right to ascertain, by themselves or by their representatives, the necessity of the public tax, to consent to it freely, to follow the employment of it, and to determine the quota, the assessment, the collection, and the duration of it.

15. Society has the right to call for an account of his administration from every public agent.

16. Any society in which the guarantee of the rights is not secured, or the separation of powers not determined, has no constitution at all.

17. Property being a sacred and inviolable right, no one can be deprived of it, unless a legally established public necessity evidently demands it, under the condition of a just and prior indemnity.

## The Tennis Court Oath

The National Assembly, considering that it has been summoned to determine the constitution of the kingdom, to effect the regeneration of public order, and to maintain the true principles of the monarchy; that nothing can prevent it from continuing its deliberations in whatever place it may be forced to establish itself, and lastly, that wherever its members meet together, there is the National Assembly.

Decrees that all the members of this assembly shall immediately take a solemn oath never to separate, and to reassemble wherever circumstances shall require, until the constitution of the kingdom shall be established and consolidated upon firm foundations; and that, the said oath being taken, all the members and each of them individually shall ratify by their signatures this steadfast resolution.

*Anderson: Constitutions and Doc. of France.

## FRANCE A REPUBLIC

UNTIL the convocation of the Legislative Assembly in October, 1791, the Revolution had been largely the work of the middle class—the *bourgeois*. It had labored for the leveling of society and the abolishment of the privileged orders; however its members were, as a rule, an educated class who valued law and order and were disposed to regard a limited monarchy as the most desirable form of government. From this time forward the influence of the *bourgeoisie* was to lessen and that of the proletariat increase. The lower classes had been slighted by the makers of the Constitution, who relegated all persons too poor to pay taxes to the support of the government to a nondescript passive citizenship. During the next few years they were to prove themselves anything but passive in practice, however they might be regarded theoretically.

Were one to throw the French Revolution into dramatic form, the prologue might appropriately include a panorama of the French peasantry under the old régime. The first act, comprising several scenes, would be concerned with the preliminaries of the States-General and its absorption into the National Assembly, while the creation of a constitution and the formulation of the declaration of rights would easily fill a second act to the full. The climax must be the establishment of the Republic, with its accompanying tragedy of the king's death. Thereafter the movement declines to the usurpation of power by the first director.

In face of such distorted writing as Carlyle's *French Revolution*—written to fill the English people with such a horror of a revolution that they would refuse all reform whatsoever for a generation—and the lurid pictures portrayed in Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities,* the impression has frequently obtained that the Revolution meant the butchering of nobles, the execution of a rather simple-minded man who had the misfortune to inherit the French crown, and all the insurrection, bloodshed and disorder that disfigured the movement. Beyond a question, the French Revolution

was accompanied by all these deplorable features but it was by no means synonymous with them. The Revolution was the change of government from an absolute monarchy to a republic. Revolutions have sometimes been accomplished without bloodshed—cite, for example, that of 1688, in England, when the crown was taken from James II—incapable of learning that the theory of "divine right of kings" had been exploded—and bestowed upon his daughter, Mary II, and her consort, William III.

The Revolution in Russia in recent times has afforded the present generation opportunity to observe the passing of privilege under circumstances not unlike those existing in France between 1789 and 1795. We need only substitute the word Jacobin for Bolshevik to make the comparison plainer. Indeed, the French dynasty was less corrupt than the one deposed in Russia and the French leaders who swayed the mobs were often more practical than those who incited the Russian peasants. Certainly the influence of the earlier revolution had far wider results than had the one scarcely concluded in Russia.

"There is not a single civilized man on the earth today whose life, thought and destinies have not been profoundly influenced by what happened in or near France during those five and twenty years of action, wrath and fire."[1]

In November all nobles who had fled to other parts of Europe were notified by the Assembly to return to France by January of the new year or forfeit their holdings, which otherwise would revert to the state. Needless to say, in view of the violence suffered by those who had remained, such a mandate received little heed.

The king, who looked with one eye on the actions of the émigrés and the Austrian Emperor and the other on the distasteful developments at home, was forced to choose a Girondist ministry. The Girondists were so-called because their leaders came from the Department of Gironde. Their ranks augmented by men from all parts of the country, they were, as a rule, young lawyers carried away by the teachings of Rousseau and other philosophers; their intentions were honest but they saw no reason why expedients that had served in Athens and Rome should not be as

applicable to France of the eighteenth century. They favored deposing the king but looked with horror upon the orgy of crime which the extremists used later as a means of wiping out those of aristocratic sympathies.

The Austrian Emperor, whose attitude had long been awaited, finally announced that France must return to the conditions set forth by Louis XVI when he held his royal sitting on June 23, 1789, and all properties be restored to the clergy. This ultimatum provoked loud laughter when made known to the Assembly. Armies were mobilized to march against those of Prussia and Austria.

Imagining that his threats would so alarm the insurgents in Paris that they would immediately restore his one-time authority to the king, the Duke of Brunswick published a manifesto on July 7th. As he was the trusted general of Frederick the Great, this leader of the Prussian troops and the émigrés awakened wild fears in France; the patriots saw all they had achieved suddenly cast into jeopardy. Brunswick made known his intention of marching to liberate the French king, to visit punishment on all who stood against him and, should the king and royal family be disturbed, he threatened the destruction of Paris. Instead of serving to protect Louis XVI, such incendiary language operated against him. Suddenly those who had refused to break with the monarch, right or wrong, sensed the predicament of a State when its ruler, presumably its supreme protector, was intriguing with the foe against his subjects. Such a condition of affairs was plainly insufferable.

About this time there arrived in Paris a regiment of volunteers from the city of Marseilles; they had marched the intervening distance to deliver the country from the "Austrian woman." They sang *La Marseillaise,* the most stirring military hymn of modern times. Danton, the strongest leader after Mirabeau, applied himself to inciting the most ignorant and criminal classes. Threats were heard to sack the Tuileries unless the Assembly deposed Louis.

Visitors to Lucerne, Switzerland, know well the wounded lion, carved after Thorwaldson's design out of living rock,

the inscription reading: "To the glory and honor of the Helvetians, who died defending Louis XVI, king of France, on August 10, 1792." Reference is thus made to the heroism of the nine hundred Swiss mercenaries who had been set to guard the Tuileries. Attacked by mobs bent on destroying the king, they held their position undaunted. As it happened, Louis XVI and his family had taken refuge in the neighboring hall of the Assembly without notifying the guards. The king could never endure the thought of killing his fellowmen; hearing shots, he sent word to the Swiss to cease firing; their leader had been slain and upon receiving this order they had no chance to defend themselves but were cut down almost to a man.

The king was suspended by the Assembly and since it was deemed wisest to set up a republic, provision was made for the immediate summoning of a convention to prepare a new constitution for France.

Brunswick hurried on to Verdun. Learning that the town was making no preparation to halt him, the French general committed suicide. France was at this moment in a highly critical condition. The allied forces had penetrated forty miles within her borders. It was well known that many of the aristocrats sympathized with those who hoped to restore the old régime. The enemies at home were regarded as dangerous as those on the frontiers. Marat, a frenzied demagogue, now proposed the quick dispatch of two hundred thousand nobles and non-conforming clergy in the country.

It was thus that the September massacres began. Three hundred assassins were hired—the offscourings of society. Three thousand aristocrats were bundled off to the prisons and, when these were filled to overflowing, to convents. Four days the murderers went the rounds of these places and butchered the priests and nobles in cold blood. Refreshments were furnished the murderers, especially wine, and mobs fought for seats to witness the revolting spectacle. It is estimated that eleven hundred were slain in Paris alone. Marat then called upon the provinces to imitate the example of the metropolis.

Nothing had been done by the Assembly to increase the

food production of France. As autumn advanced, bread rose to an almost prohibitive price. Hunger added to the demoralization of the populace. As fortune had it, the Duke of Brunswick was repulsed and began a retreat. Louis XVI was subjected to a mock trial, not unlike that which brought Charles I to the scaffold. His conviction was a foregone conclusion and he was executed on the twenty-first of January, 1793.

It has since been proved that Marie Antoinette forwarded the plan of the campaign to be followed by the French armies to her nephew in Austria; her brother Leopold had died and his son occupied the throne.

One can but mourn the destruction of the king and queen of France for they were plainly the victims of circumstance. It is true that a ruler as astute as Henry IV would have early allied himself with the people and become their true and tried leader. Neither Louis nor his wife had the capacity to do so. They could not comprehend the turn affairs had taken and felt that promises which were wrenched from them under protest were not binding. For the freedom of a people, remnants of the antiquated system of privilege suffered in many instances incurring the supreme penalty of death.

[1] Davis: *History of France,* 269.

## UNDER THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL

THE death of the king rendered invalid the first Constitution, which had been completed in September of 1791; for it had been framed for France as a limited monarchy. According to it, the king and his ministers were the executives and the entire instrument had been created around the sovereign, although his powers had been weakened and his authority impaired. Upon the establishment of the Republic it was paramount that a new Constitution should be provided to meet the changed conditions.

As quickly as the delegates chosen by the people to form a Constitutional Convention reached Paris, the Legislative Assembly dissolved itself to make way for this new body, which opened its session on September 20, 1792.

A new declaration of rights was framed, its articles extended from the original seventeen to thirty-three. Regarding freedom of worship the first declaration had said: "No one may be molested on account of his opinions, even religious, provided their expression does not disturb the public order established by the law." The new statement went farther: "Every man is free in the exercise of his religion." In 1789 delegates had declared for the liberty of the press, while claiming it subject to responsibility for the abuse of this liberty in the case determined by the law. The new form read: "The liberty of the press and of all other means of publishing thought cannot be prohibited, suspended or limited."

The convention which set itself to preparing the new Constitution granted the franchise to all males of twenty-one years of age. No longer was there talk of "active" and "passive" citizens. Further it decreed that no Constitution could be set over the country unless ratified by the vote of the people. The referendum was adopted, so that even war had first to be referred to the people.

It is needless to discuss this paper further for the reason that it was never put into operation. It was finished by the beginning of the following summer and subjected to a vote

in each commune, being accepted by an overwhelming majority. Everywhere the need of a Constitution was regarded as fundamental; moreover, the people as a whole were not satisfied with the personnel of the convention and desired to have the opportunity to elect a new legislative house. However, after a great public celebration had been made upon the adoption of the new instrument, the convention announced that it would be ill-advised to adjourn when foreign armies were on French soil. Members were able to convince their constituents of this attitude and, as a matter of fact, the convention continued until 1795.

The student finds ample material for a detailed study of this highly absorbing period in such elaborate treatments as those of Lavisse and Duruy nor is there dearth of brief histories for the general reader. In subsequent years the world has grown more accustomed to great human dramas wherein a nation is locked for awhile in the grip of conflicting passions and death is dealt out by groups, each in turn more radical than the last. The eventful years of the Russian upheaval are still vividly in mind, but it is safe to say that beyond the confines of that country this made no such commotion as the Revolution of 1789. France was one of the first European countries to throw off the shackles of an absolute monarchy and her example brought hope to many lands. Russia was one of the last countries to take on the ideas of modernity; consequently its reforms counted for little beyond its own confines.

It would be possible to construct the story of the Revolution in France by means of biography alone, following the careers of those who became leaders, then victims of the social turmoil. The outstanding characters of this particular period—reaching from the fall of the monarchy to the establishment of the Directory—were Marat, Danton and Robespierre. The convention fell into three general divisions: the Plain, including the mass of neutral deputies, who sided now with one, now with the other of the two clearly defined parties: the Girondins and the Mountain. Simply stated, the strife between them centered in whether Paris or the Department of France should dominate the conven-

tion. The Girondins struggled for the country as distinct from the capital; the Mountain, made up of Parisians and their sympathizers, worked for the preponderance of Paris. Yet in the earlier months, all worked harmoniously together on some questions. It was when the rivalry grew intense among the leaders that party war raged fiercest.

Marat was the leader of the proletariat—the lower classes. He was often spoken of as the "tribune," from the officer and protector of the plebeians in the early Roman Republic. Deformed in body, ugly, cruel, and repulsive to the sensitive, he was affectionately called the "friend of the people" by the mobs with whom his influence was great. When the Reign of Terror dawned, Marat gloated over the victims who fell at the guillotine. Because he was regarded by some as the terror incarnate, Charlotte Corday journeyed from Normandy to Paris, expecting to strike him, at the convention, and so put an end to the slaughter. Instead, she found him confined to his house and stabbed him, in the bath, where he was compelled to remain for days together to find relief from the sting of eczema. Although her motives were unselfish and she willingly paid with her life for her crime, Marat dead was even more potent than Marat alive, for now he was venerated as a martyr to the cause he had served.

Danton had the clearness of vision that characterized Mirabeau but not the same tenacity of purpose. For awhile his was the practical counsel, meeting problems a day at a time; wasting no effort on theories or attempting to couch sentiments in the happiest phrases, he was to be found on the frontier, where the army needed requisitioning; in the province, where the people were incensed at the turn matters were taking because they did not understand them; in the convention, recalling theorists to pressing needs. Presently he sickened of the whirlpool of seething humanity and quit Paris altogether. In so doing he lost his grip on public affairs while his great rival, Robespierre, remained at home and filled the days and nights with his activities. When Danton returned, he was no longer in the thick of the fight. Certain of the policies for which he had stood proved mistaken. Robespierre was too thoroughly an ego-

tist to leave a rival in the field, and he signed the order for Danton's execution.

Of Robespierre himself, who shall speak? Books have been written to malign him, and as many more to do him honor. He was a product of the Revolution, and in the end was handed over to the guillotine, to which he had so tirelessly committed his enemies. During his dictatorship it had seemed as if the end would never come to the clearing of those crowded prisons, to make room for new victims, while the heads fell as the fishwomen counted their stitches by the guillotine which had been erected before the Tuileries—once the proud palace of the Bourbons. Robespierre dreamed of setting up a model government, but to him this meant first the elimination of all bad citizens—that is, of those who differed with him. So, as a preliminary measure, he gave himself over to the dispatching of these unhappy people. Having given notice that he intended to "purify" the convention—no man knowing whom he had marked for his private slaughter, since he refused to disclose it—the deputies turned upon him and sent him the way of Danton and hundreds of others, who had been beheaded at his orders. Cartoons are illuminating in portraying contemporary thought. One appearing in a Paris newspaper pictured Robespierre by the guillotine with a headless victim and beneath ran the legend: The Last Man.

The death of Louis XVI had been the signal for European nations to organize to quell the anarchy in France. Had this been confined to French borders it might have been allowed to take its natural course; but the revolutionary leaders had announced that theirs was the cause of all the oppressed and had not hesitated to say that the arms of France would be sent to the relief of the down-trodden; also that their natural boundaries were the ocean, the Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrennes. This made the injuries of the royalists the concern of all kings who wished to keep their territories free from throes of revolution. Armies were sent against France and for awhile threatened the very survival of the state. Had it not been that the dismemberment of Poland occupied the close attention of Prussia and Austria, to say nothing of Russia, it is difficult

to see how disrupted France could have held her own against the coalition. As it was, after the armies of the Revolution had suffered some defeats, conditions began to improve for them.

It was when France was almost paralyzed with fear at the first victories won from her, that the Revolutionary Government came into existence, to serve until the danger was over. In the first place, quick decisions were needed and these are rarely obtained from a large unwieldly body, such as the convention. It was necessary to draft the men of military age and choose them by lots. This provoked uprisings in districts where the peasants had fared tolerably under the old régime and where the discrimination against non-juring clergy was deeply resented. Above all, there were tens of thousands of nobles and many resentful clergy still in France who would welcome a counter-revolution and the re-establishment of the monarcy. Marat infuriated the people: the enemies at home must be subdued before there could be safety for the newly-formed Republic, already baptized in blood.

The Revolutionary Tribunal was formed to hear the cases of "suspects" who were gathered into wagons and haled to prisons. Needless to say the trials were a mockery. The guillotine, an instrument of execution named from its inventor, one Dr. Guillotin, a delegate to the States-General in 1789, was put to work and its hours were limited only by the physical endurance of ruffians chosen for butchers, similar tribunals were formed in the communes, where Jacobin clubs had already done their inflammatory work. Lyons and Nantes are conspicuous examples of the lengths to which the madness ran in its bloody career. These cities opposed the draft of soldiers and resented the closing of the churches. Revolts occurred. Dreadful vengeance was visited upon them by the Revolutionary Government. At Nantes boats were loaded with people, sent to sea and sunk. It being too lengthly a process to deal with them individually, the people were shot in squads.

The repulsion that is felt whenever the French Revolution is mentioned has its *raison d'etre* in these grewsome excesses to which the people, drunk with power, rushed

when central authority was relaxed. Similar scenes were enacted during the Russian Revolution. However in neither case were these a part of the revolution, but its accompaniments. Centuries of oppression and cruel punishments for misdemeanors—such as sending men to the galleys for killing a rabbit or breaking on the wheel a laborer who repulsed an insulting tax collector—had left deep imprint upon the masses. The lower classes had often been face to face with starvation and, since trouble had begun in 1789, there had been a steady stream of people turning toward Paris, where everything of importance centered. Food production was lessened and bread high. The dregs of society learned what could be done by thronging into a legislative hall and calling for victims. Fearful lest they themselves be lost, deputies had yielded to such threats. It was the clamour of the multitude that finally brought about the fall of the Girondins.

In time human nature revolts at slaughter; when the populace was satiated with the blood of thousands of hapless victims and of some who richly deserved the fate meted out to them, the tide turned with the death of the chief hangman, Robespierre. That he was sincere in his convictions few can doubt; that he was equal to the task to which he set himself: the establishment of a model republic, few familiar with his life will believe.

Prisoners who had expected an hourly summons to the place of execution found themselves dismissed, to make room for the terrorists, who were at last compelled to take some of their own medicine. After the red terror came the white terror—a revenge taken by surviving royalists.

The cry rose and became more insistent for the "Constitution of 1793." Like men released from a black nightmare, the members of the convention finally turned to constructive measures, now that the destructive elements had at length subsided.

*As, for example, in Brittany.

## UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF 1795

FEW present-day readers find military exploits absorbing. Modern warfare has so transformed the science of defense and attack that campaigns waged in the past appear diminutive in comparison. Yet the story of revolutionary France, as it set to work to make soldiers out of youths who had bitterly opposed compulsory drafts, thrills one even now. Under discipline they soon lost their earlier admiration for the fickle city mobs and came to place their confidence and pride in the prompt decision of arms.

It was a curious combination of circumstances that enabled raw recruits to win victories over the armies of the coalition, so that the French government was able to negotiate separate treaties with several of the countries that had hastened to join forces in face of common danger. In the eyes of the statesmen of Prussia and Austria the dismemberment of Poland seemed more vital than warring for territories along the Rhine; consequently the French presently found themselves in possession of its left bank—their objective on the northeast. The Pyrenees, ocean and Rhine being now their acknowledged boundaries, it remained to reach out for the fourth objective, the Alps.

The reaction toward monarchical government became more pronounced. It was to be expected that relatives of the émigrés would look favorably upon any project designed to bring back the Bourbons and return to the limited monarchy established by the Constitution of 1791. But so great had been the disgust of the bourgeoisie at the excesses of the people that they too were disposed to join with the royalists after the fall of Robespierre, making it difficult for the radicals to maintain a balance in the convention and impossible for them longer to dominate it. The reaction in public feeling was so marked that the "Plain," always moderate by choice, now had the courage to assert itself. Generally speaking, the middle class preferred a republic to a monarchy, but they were opposed to the socialistic Constitution which had been ratified in the com-

munes in 1793. Subsequent demonstrations of the masses had proved that they could not yet be trusted to carry on the government of a young republic and the result was that a third Constitution was prepared and accepted in 1795. This one, at least, was given a trial.

The new Constitution established two chambers of legislators: the lower house was known as the Council of 500, its members elected by the people. The upper house was called the Council of Ancients, since the members must be forty-five years of age; they numbered 250 and were chosen by the lower house. Executive power was vested in a board of five men, known as the *Directoire*. Wide power was granted this board, whose members were selected by the ancients from lists prepared by the Council of 500.

Since the pendulum had already started on its backward course, and power was returning to the more substantial and stable middle classes, the franchise was granted to taxpayers only.

The convention looked with dismay upon the possibility of the reactionaries being able to dominate the first council and so took the drastic step of requiring two-thirds of its membership to be chosen from its own. This so angered the people that they immediately planned to employ the method which had proved so effectual on former occasions: namely, to terrorize the convention and compel it to yield to the mob, this time drawn from the upper, rather than the lower stratum. How often had fear clutched at the hearts of the delegates in the early assembly, as throngs of people, shouting their demands, had filed through the hall! The convention had passed through alarming experiences, not once but several times. Now it was threatened by a repetition of the old menace. The National Guards of Paris, to the number of twenty thousand, spent the night in street processions and carousing, with thoughts of what they should do on the morrow, inflaming popular sentiment.

It was on this occasion that an obscure officer of artillery was asked by General Barras to defend the Tuileries, wherein the convention had met since the death of Louis XVI. By adroit manipulation, he placed his cannon where they could command all approaches to the place. When the

mobs began to move *en masse* toward the legislative hall, volleys of grape shot from the mouths of several cannon quickly converted the attack into a hasty retreat. Thus ended the Revolution, so far as mob violence was concerned. However, it was significant that the army had saved the government of France. *Soldiers, not law makers,* had at last quelled the tumult—that might have been halted long before had anyone appeared at the helm who could consider the general welfare without identifying it with his personal ambitions.

It was high time that bloodshed ceased in France. Taine estimates the victims of the six years' struggle at 500,000; others think a million none too large. Thousands of these had met their end by paying "a visit to Madame Guillotine." Thousands had died in battle, on the frontiers. In view of the blind destruction which had run riot throughout the land, it is evident that figures can be but hypothetical.

"France lay sick: the fever of 1789, the superhuman effort of 1792, the blood-letting of 1793 and 1794, the never-ceasing starvation of all those years, had brought on a kind of anæmia complicated by neurasthenia. . . . France lay exhausted but for a spasm now and again. Her one longing was to seek cure in perfect rest. No remedy for her state would be found in fresh revolution or in counter-revolution: so, with a weary gesture, she waved both aside. Because, though her passions were almost, if not quite burnt out, she still had interest: she clung to the conquests she had bought so dearly: sick and anæmic, she was indeed, but she had laid herself down upon a treasure she was resolved to guard."[1]

Her armies were to press into Italy for the purpose of setting up little republics in the place of tyranny and to spread the gospel of liberty throughout the world. It seemed to those who had suffered for the Republic that France should lead the oppressed of Europe to share the freedom which she had already won. Because the form of government recently established did not provide for a firm executive policy, the way was left open for the army, expressing itself through its chief, presently to gain the upper hand. The times and the man combined to raise up one of

those self-appointed world-conquerors who have appeared every few centuries since history began; his attempt to dominate lasted well into the nineteenth century.

The suffering and bloodshed which had accompanied the Revolution of 1789 were presently forgotten; but the results remained. The allied powers were successfully re-establishing a Bourbon king upon the throne of France and twice, at least, so far as outward appearance was concerned, it seemed as though the republicans had lost the cause for which they had struggled so valiantly. However, at no time were the insupportable feudal conditions revived; they had passed forever into the limbo of the past; and two kings were to learn to their sorrow, when they attempted to rule as though the Revolution had not been fought and won, that they were no longer necessary to France. It is for this permanent result that the influence of the French Revolution was tremendous. In the extreme east of Europe it was possible for absolute rulers to continue their oppressions a hundred years longer but throughout the western part of the continent, where contact with French ideals was close and continuous, the struggle of 1789 sounded the knell of despots.

[1] Madelin: *The French Revolution*, 441.
[2] Napoleon Bonaparte.

## THE NAPOLEONIC ERA

THERE are many ways of viewing the career of Napoleon. Contemporaries were so dazzled by the sheer will-power and genius of the man that they saw in him something more than human. Students of military science still find his campaigns absorbing. His memory is inscribed indelibly in the minds of schoolboys, and people the world over are fascinated with his remarkable life, whether they hold him in admiration or abhorrence. It is impossible to explain genius and Whistler's fancy that it wanders over the earth, touching a mortal here and there with its magic wand, is as acceptable an explanation as any in the absence of knowledge. There is something within us all that thrills at tremendous undertakings and exults in their accomplishment and while our judgment commends the fine act and condemns the unworthy, yet audacity itself compels admiration if it be on a sufficiently gigantic scale.

Napoleon Bonaparte was born in the island of Corsica in 1769; his parents were of Italian extraction and noble though poor. The boy attended schools of mediocre type until at the age of fifteen he was sent to the military academy of Paris. He early evinced marked ability in mathematics and military science and gained a minor office before he was twenty. We have already seen that he was able to bring unusual penetration to the problem of saving the Convention from the attack of the royalist mobs, clearing the streets by firing grape-shot into them. Such summary method of handling the mob menace had not previously been seen in Paris and it terminated the danger by its very suddenness. This *unexpected* action of Napoleon gives a key to the student of his later life. He profited by his experience on this occasion and used swiftness, speed and quick decision effectively throughout. Beyond a doubt his mental vibrations were much quicker than those of average men and consequently it required great coalitions and considerable time for allied forces to check him.

Barras was deeply grateful to him for his timely assistance and gave him command of the Army of the Interior.

It so happened that Napoleon had spent some little time working with a topographical bureau and his keen penetration permitted him to realize the importance of properly outlined campaigns, in order to take the enemy at disadvantage. He had already submitted a plan on paper for a campaign in northern Italy, with which district he was acquainted. When this was afterwards sent to the commander of the Italian Army he returned it with the sarcastic comment that the one who had devised it should be sent to execute it—and he was, to the surprise of said commander.

Those acquainted with military life well know the scorn which men grown old in the service have for the inexperienced and the wrath which they ill conceal when such persons are promoted above them. Napoleon had this to face at the age of twenty-seven when he arrived to execute those rapid movements in northern Italy which staggered Austria and caused the Italians to hail him as a deliverer. Here again is to be found an example of his characteristic tactics: causing the conquered to feel that he came to their relief. Nor have many generals been able to inspire such confidenee in their soldiers. The condition of the army was deplorable when Bonaparte came to the fore. France, harassed for money, had not been able to pay her troops that marched away to carry the glad tidings of freedom to the oppressed. Neither had she been able to clothe, feed or equip them properly. There was no indication that this wretched condition would change; consequently Napoleon adopted the prevailing idea that the army must make its way as it marched. With the well-nigh impassible Alps before him, the redoubtable commander was able to win the devotion of every man by words like these: "Soldiers, you are half-starved and half-naked; the Government owes you much but can do nothing for you. I am about to lead you into the most fertile valleys of the world; there you will find flourishing cities, and teeming provinces; there you will reap honor, glory and riches. Soldiers of the Army of Italy, will you be lacking in courage?" One can imagine

how the half famished boys, catching the inspiration of his appeal, would quicken in courage and endeavor. After the dreadful battle at Lodi, they claimed him for their own "the Little Corporal." It was better to die for such a leader than to live with those who were incapable and half-hearted.

The Treaty of Campo-Formio, 1797, imposed humiliating terms upon Austria. Territories which had been avowedly hers and other districts which were said to be under her "protection," were organized into the ephemeral "Cis-Alpine Republic," to be protected by France. In compensation, Austria was allowed to appropriate Venetia.

Napoleon was already feared by the *Directoire*, whose members were dismayed by his sudden appearance in France. Their eagerness to have him gone was apparent. Nor was the military leader willing to be long away from the fray. He conceived of a great oriental empire and knew that the capture of India would be a deadly blow to England. Accordingly, he set out in 1798 to open his campaign in Egypt, as a preliminary step, taking Malta *en route*. His quick movements may be judged by the fact that he left France on the 19th of May, reached Egypt on the first day of July, took Alexandria on the second, fought the Battle of the Pyramids on the twenty-first, entered Cairo on the twenty-fourth. His scheme was dealt a fatal blow when Nelson defeated his navy the first day of August in the Battle of the Nile. Still Napoleon was unwilling to abandon his plan, and attempted the capture of cities in Asia Minor. He was halted before Acre and compelled to retreat, since his men were dying of cholera.

At no time was France more weakly governed than under the *Directoire*. The directors fell out with one another and quarrelled, while the country was left in a miserable condition. The only cause the French had to rejoice was the brilliant victories of the army won by their great general; his defeats were not reported. It was easy for him to appear unexpectedly, and, by what the French term a *coup d'etat* —literally, blow of the state—to concentrate the departments of government largely in his own hands.

As usual, it was in order to draft a new Constitution.

This provided for three directors instead of five; however, one alone was powerful. Dust was thrown in the eyes of the suspicious by the creation of a Senate, designed to be the "custodians and protectors of the Constitution"; while two houses were set up: the Tribunate and the Legislative body.

This done, Napoleon was soon back in Italy where Austria needed again to be taught a lesson, at the battle of Marengo. The Holy Roman Empire was dissolved and presently Prussia and Austria were prostrate. When the Peace of Amiens was made with England, in 1802, France experienced her first complete peace in ten years.

By this time Napoleon had already realized that his gigantic plan of conquest depended upon his ability to conquer England or at least to bring her to a state of helplessness similar to that to which he had already brought Austria. He conceived the idea of augmenting the French navy, which had been weakened by his earlier losses in the Mediterranean adventure and was in doubtful condition at best, so that it might screen the passage of a great French army on rafts across the English Channel. This hope was forever ended by Nelson's magnificent achievement off the Cape of Trafalgar. Thenceforward there was no longer possibility of naval undertakings. The far-off dream of once more creating a Colonial empire for France evaporated into thin air.

It was in the spring of 1804 that Napoleon proclaimed himself Emperor of France. Having followed the long struggle by which the French had shaken themselves free from monarchs and established a republic, we are prone to wonder at the ease with which Napoleon accomplished this feat; but we are viewing the matter after generations of political freedom. France had known republican government for only a few brief years, during which conditions had been unhappy. The internal situation was wretched "Everywhere the roads were practically impassable for want of repairs. In the environs of towns and villages the pavements even had been torn up by the inhabitants, who used the stones to repair their walls. In the open country the roads were also cut up by bogs where carriages were

engulfed and sometimes ran the risk of disappearing. Bridges were collapsing everywhere.

"The lack of public security and the general lawlessness were even more deplorable. Bands of brigands . . . succeeded in rendering traveling nigh impossible. They pillaged the government strong-boxes and halted the stage-coaches. The public coach from Nantes to Angers was once held up five times in a single journey in a distance of forty miles. . . . At certain points travelers bought a safe-conduct in cash from the chiefs of the bands. . . . The power of the State was anything but respected. Taxes were not paid or were paid very slowly."[1]

Under circumstances such as these, it is scarcely to be wondered that when Napoleon announced that his actions were designed to preserve the principles for which the Revolution had been waged, the country gave him unanimous support.

Napoleon's continental victories of 1805 were astonishing. With 65,000 soldiers, he won the battle of Austerlitz over 85,000 soldiers of the Allies. Austria was forced to make the Peace of Pressburg. Prussia dared to rise up against the conqueror and suffered woeful defeat at Jena. Napoleon and Alexander I of Russia met on a raft in the Niemen River and planned to share Europe between them. The Treaty of Tilsit marks Napoleon's greatest power.

Probably no one today who peruses the stirring events of these remarkable campaigns realizes more keenly than did Napoleon himself that his mighty fabric was lacking in substantiality. As rapidly as a country, such as Austria, for example, could get a breathing spell and recruit a new army, no treaty amounted to anything. If we would realize how unreal are the visible forms, we can do no better than rivet our attention upon this mighty empire that Napoleon called into existence, to vanish like a city in the gorgeous clouds at sunset.

Those who find the psychology of Napoleon I the all-absorbing aspect, point to indications that his vision was becoming clouded in 1808 and that his acts of ruthlessness were growing more frequent. He had decreed that all commercial dealings between Europe and England cease, hop-

ing thus to ruin Britain through her trade and manufactures. Portugal refused to comply. Consequently Portugal was overrun with troops. Spain was decrepit and he did not hesitate to compel its ruler to renounce the throne, instating his own brother upon it. Such high-handed acts might have led to ultimate triumph in the days of Cyrus or Alexander. It was inevitable that they must fail in the early years of the nineteenth century.

The divorce of Josephine and marriage with the Arch-Duchess of Austria looked toward the establishment of the dynasty of Napoleon upon the French throne in place of the banished Bourbons. The little "King of Rome" in due time gave some element of plausibility to the scheme.

The Russian campaign was the beginning of the end. Even the reader, untaught in matters of warfare, senses the insidious danger of a Russian winter for troops not inured to its rigors. A defeat was the long-awaited signal for the outraged potentates of Europe to arise for the final conflict; we know how surely they were still in the thraldom of their fears when they permitted Napoleon to retain his title Emperor, gave him an island for his kingdom and fifteen hundred troops. Slight wonder was it that the master of intrigue should bide his time, only to appear with his customary unexpectedness when the victors were wrangling over the spoils at the Congress of Vienna. The hundred days capped an unparallel career, for the exile of St. Helena was merely the waiting for the end. Those sent to capture the returning commander fell at his feet and swore their devotion. Who can fail to experience a thrill as he reads how the magnetism of the "Little Corporal" brought them again under his spell? Waterloo terminated a struggle that could have but one ending: the vanquishing of the self-appointed world conqueror.

It has been estimated that France lost three million men in the Napoleonic wars. When Metternich argued for peace, Napoleon answered him: "Little do you know a soldier's mind. A man such as I gives little heed to the lives of a million men!"

It is reflection upon sentiments like this that restores our perspective and enables us to see Napoleon as he was.

In the French Alps, Haute-Savoie Region, the Mecca of Native Tourists

La Mer de Glace Glacier in the Environs of Mont Blanc, Europe's Highest Mountain

This Alpine section is off the beaten path, consequently visited by the discriminating foreign tourist

Had he been fighting these battles for the achievement of a great cause or the freedom of a people, the end might have justified the means. That he waged them for self-aggrandizement is what we can never forgive him, however we may admire his infinite resource and dauntless courage. His early victories and late defeats are to be explained in part by the kind of armies he commanded. The soldiers who filled his early regiments had been trained in the war fought for "natural boundaries." Most of them were seasoned fighters before they came under his inspiring guidance. The conscriptions made to augment his ranks brought more able-bodied Frenchmen to his aid. As the ceaseless demand for more soldiers and still more continued, the age limit was lessened at one end and extended at the other. As one nation after another was added to his conquests, each was required to provide new armies. It is said that all European languages save English were heard in his camps. At last the calibre of the army had changed. It became well-nigh impossible to raise more troops in France. Three-quarters of those drafted deserted before they reached the front, despite heavy penalties visited upon the families of deserters. Eighteen years of almost continual fighting in some quarter, to say nothing of earlier battles for the Rhine boundary, had bled France white.

Nevertheless it would be idle to suppose that this long period of strife was wholly unproductive of good. One great benefit to Europe was the wiping out of feudalism, which still survived in the German states. Another was the elimination of countless little principalities, dukedoms and counties whose rulers only added to the burden of the people who supported them. The Congress of Vienna endeavored to restore the map of Europe as it had existed before the outbreak of the Revolution but this attempt in many respects was futile.

[1] Davis: *History of France.*

## MORE KINGS

THE downfall of Napoleon brought an abrupt end to the first Empire. European rulers desired above all else that there might be a cessation of turbulence and unrest in France, which had led to so much disturbance in Europe generally. They were determined that no member of the Bonaparte family should reign in France and they verily detested the word *republic*. There was no help, consequently, but to restore the Bourbons to the throne of their fathers.

The son of Louis XVI is believed to have died of cruel neglect in prison, in 1795. Thereafter, his uncle, brother of Louis XVI, being next in line, was saluted as king by the émigrés. He was now a man sixty years of age, wearied by baffled hopes and waiting a quarter of a century for the restoration that now raised him to the throne of a people who had waged a costly struggle to win popular rights and republican government.

No indemnity was set upon the French at the first defeat of Napoleon and certain of the conquered territories on the western side of the Rhine were left in their possession. Not so after the hundred days, which would have been impossible without the support of the French army. The Allies, in Paris for the second time within a year, exacted a sum approximating $150,000,000, and placed garrisons in frontier towns until this should be paid. To the credit of the French nation be it said that they valiantly discharged this amount in full by 1818—two years earlier than had been thought possible.

Now for a second time Louis XVIII was placed upon the throne by the concerted powers of Europe but his return called forth little enthusiasm from the people. The peasants, largely in possession of land, were content to be left to win a frugal living from the soil, regardless of who might reign over them. It was in Paris where artisans and factory labor centered, where disturbances were easily roused.

Louis XVIII had grown wise in exile. He was politic enough to desire to propitiate his people, hoping like Charles II of England, he would not be required "to set forth on his journey again." But the returning nobles had long awaited the day when they might once more come into their own. Upon them lies the blame for the useless shooting of General Ney and other of the military leaders who had gone over to Napoleon upon his arrival in France. They were the ones who carried on the "White Terror" in southern France—as bloody a strife as had been the "Red Terror" of the revolutionists in some localities.

A constitutional charter was granted by the restored Bourbon to the nation—indeed, this was required by the Allies, who sought to make future trouble unlikely. However, the franchise was limited to those paying taxes above 150 dollars per annum while to hold a place in the lower house, one must needs be a still heavier supporter of the government. This meant entrusting the affairs of state exclusively to the substantial bourgeois and the royalists, while the masses were excluded. The royalists were strong enough to enact laws censoring the press, creating an extensive secret police and they inaugurated a systematic persecution of those who had participated in the government of Napoleon.

Louis XVIII occupied the French throne from 1814 until his death in 1824. However, he dated his reign from 1785, the year wherein he would have succeeded according to the old régime.

His younger brother, long known as the Count d'Artois, followed him. Louis had often said that he shuddered to think of France after he was gone, for the reactionary principles of Count d'Artois were well understood. Almost every writer mentioning him points out the similarities between him and James II of England. Neither appeared to be capable of learning anything from revolution. Both threw away a crown through blind stupidity, lacking, it would seem, the least notion of what they must do to retain it under altered conditions.

Charles X, as he was called upon coronation, was king of France for six years. It required six years to convince

the industrial classes of Paris that it were idle to look for any improvement in their condition so long as he reigned. He antagonized even the liberal royalists and forced the democratic bourgeois to join forces with the people. At last, by posting ordinances that revoked constitutional rights, he goaded the workers of Paris into open rebellion. This precipitated the Revolution of 1830—the so-called "July Revolution of the Three Glorious Days!"

The republicans, unforgetful of the time when a republic had been proclaimed in France, hoped now for its restitution. However, the moderates brought forward Louis Philippe, son of the Duke of Orleans who made such a play for the kingship before the deposition of Louis XVI, who voted for the death of his cousin and was himself sent to the guillotine in 1793. Louis Philippe posed as one of the middle class, fraternized with the merchants of Paris and seemed to be the wisest choice during the exciting days when a widespread insurrection might have been provoked. Even the extremists believed it expedient to accept him for the time being. He occupied the throne until 1848, at which time he thought himself sufficiently secure to remain indifferent to several warnings of the people that they were determined to obtain a share in the government or at least to secure a living wage and tolerable conditions under which to work.

Louis Philippe is often called the "Bourgeois King," for it was the middle class that exalted him and that he in turn endeavored to satisfy. The reluctance of the peasantry to take any part in upsetting public affairs, which they had found by experience so disastrous to general prosperity, kept them out of the current of politics so long as they were not interfered with. Skilled workers, dwelling in close proximity to one another, quickly incited to revolt, were responsible for the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. The last resulted in the exile of Louis Philippe and the proclamation of a republic.

The period from 1815 to 1848 in France was productive of little importance for the world generally, apart from these two attempts of radicals to regain the fruits of the Revolution of 1789, which had resulted in a republic. The

Holy Alliance had settled down to a vigilant watch lest the peoples of Europe should escape from the fetters forged by oppressive rulers to hold them bound. When the news of the July Revolution swept over Europe, all the reactionaries trembled. Belgium and Holland wrested themselves free from the union which had been foisted upon them by the Congress of Vienna. Poland breathed again and made a new attempt to regain her one-time independence. Certain of the German states roused from a lethargy that had enfolded them since those glad days when the tenets of liberty had temporarily endowed them with expression. When in 1848 another revolution brought fear to the hearts of tyrants, it stimulated new hopes, at the same time, among the common people wherever they were held under the iron rule of absolutism.

Consequently it would be misleading to count this first half of the nineteenth century inconsequent in France; these two manifestations of the people kept the conception of liberty alive when coalitions of the mighty strove to extinguish it.

During the short reign of Charles X, France launched upon a colonizing project in northern Africa which it has never abandoned. Apart from this, attention centered in constitutional rights and the futile attempts of puny kings to override them.

## REPUBLIC AND EMPIRE

AT best the monarchy established in 1830 with Louis Philippe on the throne had been a flimsy affair. The old nobility looked with disfavor upon the younger branch of the Bourbons, desiring the reinstatement of Charles X or later, his grandson. The republicans detested any type of monarchy, thinking always of the republic which the first great Revolution had brought forth. However, it was in Paris that political agitation centered. As for the nation generally, the one-time enthusiasm for "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" had been lost on the numerous battlefields to which the ambition of Napoleon I had led the rugged manhood of a generation. The rural population for the most part desired peace and order.

Under Louis Philippe and his favorite minister Guizot the foreign policy of France seemed inglorious to those who remembered more thrilling years. However, the social revolution, which had appeared earlier in England, was now assuming considerable proportions across the channel. The lot of the worker in factory and shop was extremely hard, nor was redress to be expected so long as the suffrage was limited safely to the well-to-do. Societies and clubs, socialistic in character, rapidly developed and political and social reforms were heatedly discussed. Louis Blanc, editor of a socialistic paper in Paris, was the foremost leader of the working people, and was bent on improving their lot. Banquets were held at which fiery speeches were made to unite and incite the industrial classes. It was the refusal of Guizot to permit a much-advertised banquet to be held which precipitated the Revolution of 1848.

Upon the proclamation of the second Republic and the formation of a Provisional government, it was apparent that material changes had taken place in the last few years. Socialism had raised its head. Internal rather than European affairs now absorbed the people of Paris Two parties were sharply defined. The Moderates, of whom Lamartine, the French poet, was a prominent example. The adherents

of this division wished to hold the revolution exclusively to political issues. The radicals, or socialists, wanted to combine social and political reforms. Louis Blanc and his henchman Albert made every effort to bring about this unity of interests.

The Moderates ran up the beloved tri-colored flag, associated with 1789 and the Napoleonic wars. The socialists wanted to adopt the red flag of revolution.

Several crying reforms were immediately enacted. The working day was lessened from eleven to ten hours in the city and from twelve to eleven in the country. Universal suffrage for all Frenchmen who had reached majority was proclaimed. The press was freed temporarily, at least, from the strict censorship that had hampered it. Whereas only the bourgeois had been permitted to serve in the National Guard, this was thrown open to all citizens. Slavery was abolished in French colonies.

The socialistic followers of Louis Blanc, believed that property should be communal rather than private. This tenet was to cost them the support of the peasantry—to their surprise; for those who had earned their little farms were indignant at the presumption of the "dividers-up." National workshops had been advocated in *The Reform,* a socialistic paper. The Provisional Government opened something of the kind, although not at all of the nature which Louis proposed. "To the able-bodied citizen the state owes work" was the cry, and the unemployed of the nation began to flock into Paris where, it was reported, the state provided work.

It has already been seen that each change in government necessitated a new constitution. A National Assembly met on May 4, 1848, elected by the people of the French Republic. Upon finding the deputies returned to be largely Moderates, the Socialists attempted to intimidate the assembly, only to be put down by the National Guards. Thereupon the so-called "June Revolt" of three or four days' duration occurred. The national workshops had been closed, being regarded as hotbeds of insurrection. Martial law was proclaimed and after blood had flowed in the streets, thousands of the rioters were transported to the French colonies of

Africa without trial. Order was established but at a heavy cost, for the working-classes in the city were left chafing under what they regarded as rank injustice and the general sentiment of the country turned toward repression rather than democracy. It seemed as though the supporters of the old régime must be right; that, after all, the people could scarcely be trusted to govern themselves.

The constitution of 1848 provided for a president of the republic, to be elected by all men twenty-one years old; also a legislative assembly. The election held in December of this year brought an unforeseen leader upon the scene: Louis Napoleon, nephew of the great Napoleon.

After the downfall of Napoleon I there had arisen what is often termed the "Napoleonic legend." The career of the most gifted military commander of modern times had been so brilliant and so meteoric withal that it held men spellbound even after it had ended. For several years he had held all Europe helpless before him while France expanded into vast proportions. The untold numbers of dead which his wars for aggrandizement had left on the numerous battlefields and the terrible strain which these wars had imposed upon France were lost sight of; memory of his achievements remained to fascinate men. His will contained a clause stating that he wanted to be buried on the Seine, in the midst of the people he had always loved. Accordingly, in 1840 his remains were conveyed to Paris and entombed in the Hôtel des Invalides with impressive ceremonies.

After the death of Napoleon's only son, the "King of Rome," in 1832, his nephew, Louis Napoleon, was next in line if a Bonaparte dynasty were contemplated—as it certainly was not, save by this young adventurer and his mother. Twice during the reign of Louis Philippe he attempted to win a following in France. Both ventures ended disastrously for him. In the first instance he was sent to America; the second time he was incarcerated in a prison, from which he later escaped. The part of France in European affairs had been so slight latterly, her policy so cautious, that more and more the glamour of the Napoleonic era loomed larger and more splendid. To the

amazement of the cautious, this intriguing nephew of Napoleon's polled over five million votes for president of the republic—an overwhelming majority.

As quickly as he was ensconced in office, the reins began to tighten. Men who had been his companions in former years, often of a questionable type (one writer goes so far as to say, men who would have felt at home around the gambling table and dealing in bogus stock) were placed in prominent positions. A systematic manipulation of government was begun, while the franchise was curtailed. By propaganda carefully planned, the nation was prepared for the *coup d'etat* of 1851, by which Louis Napoleon was established in office for ten years, despite a constitutional prohibition of a second consecutive term for a president; from this it was but a step to the move of the following year which made him Emperor Napoleon III. This was not accomplished without bloodshed and wholesale deportations. Patriots of recognized standing took up their residences abroad. Thousands of people were sent without trials to Africa. The needless tyranny which was exhibited by the self-appointed ruler awakened the resentment of foreigners and brought pain to the hearts of those who hated such usurpation of power but were helpless to prevent it. As a whole, the nation willingly accepted a second Napoleon, expecting a new period of importance to begin.

In many respects the twenty years during which Louis Napoleon stood at the helm of state were advantageous for France. The city of Paris was largely rebuilt. Economic progress was marked and the industrial classes prospered. But if the throne of Louis Philippe had been insecure, that of Napoleon III was even more so. In the first place, the European powers regarded him as an upstart and tolerated him only because it seemed safer for France to have a usurper on a throne than to chance the vicissitudes of rule by the people. For this reason alone the various governments slowly recognized a second Bonaparte.

The Emperor tried in various ways to assume an important rôle in Europe and for some time succeeded to some extent. Resentment at the ambitious plans of Russia led France and England to espouse the cause of Turkey in the

Crimean war, the concluding terms for which were settled at Paris. Napoleon III supported Italy against Austria but compromised the friendly relations thus formed by aiding the Pope to retain his temporal power, so preventing a united peninsula. He is sometimes blamed for having refused to permit his son to accept the throne of Belgium but such action would have been promptly resented by England, as he well knew.

One of the most ill-judged undertakings for which he was to blame was participation in the Mexican revolution, hoping thereby to benefit by the Civil war waging in the United States. He persuaded the Austrian prince, Maximilian, to accept an invitation extended to him by Mexican refugees to become emperor of Mexico, promising to support him with military forces. The underlying motive prompting Napoleon III was to gain a foothold in the Western Hemisphere at a time when our government was powerless to restrain him, for the outcome of the struggle between north and south was still problematical. No heed was given the protest of Secretary Seward that this was a flagrant violation of the Monroe doctrine; Napoleon III dreamed of a new colonial empire to replace the one already lost.

It is a tragic story, this of Maximilian and his young wife. When he was shortly found to be in a precarious position, she besought the powers of Europe in vain to help him and when he was shot by the Mexicans, she lost her reason. Her release by death came only in January, 1927.

Napoleon III's own political career was destined to have an abrupt end. For some time Prussia had been steadily gaining ground among the German states under the relentless efforts of King William I, an aggressive ruler, and of Count Bismarck. Finally it was believed that in a struggle with Austria, Prussia would be able to gain the upper hand. Bismarck had an audience with the French emperor and cajoled him into believing that if France refrained from aiding Austria in the coming strife between these two powers, she would receive territories along the Rhine. Fearing lest this agreement might not endure, Bismarck rushed the war with Austria, ended in a few weeks, before

French aid could be forthcoming. Then he ridiculed the demand made by Napoleon III for a surrender of the Rhine territory.

Relations between Germany and France, traditional foes, were somewhat strained. France was not far away from years wherein German princes had sworn homage to her great Napoleon. Prussia had developed rapidly and within a short period had perfected a regular "war machine," so thoroughly disciplined were her troops.

When the indirect causes for war are sufficiently numerous and irritating, the direct cause may be any triviality. So it was in the case of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. It is difficult to believe that two Christian nations could come to grips over so slight an occurrence.

The throne of Spain was vacant and a prince of the house of Hohenzollern—a nephew of King William of Prussia—was invited to become a candidate for it. This announcement produced a strong protest from France. It was said that the Kingdom of Charles V would again be revived. It was natural that France would object to having Hohenzollerns on either side of her. A few days later it was announced that the candidacy of the German prince had been withdrawn at King William's request. It so happened that not long before, the throne of Roumania had been publicly declined by a prince and later occupied by him, so Emperor Napoleon III requested Benedetti, ambassador to Prussia, to obtain an expression from William I to the effect that he would not consent at any time to his nephew's acceptance of the Spanish throne.

King William had gone to drink the waters at Ems and Benedetti met him on the promenade. Taking advantage of the circumstance, he pressed the king to commit himself on the matter. King William resorted to the shield of not being conversant with the case nor even knowing that his relative had withdrawn his name. He courteously but firmly refused to commit himself as to the future. Thereupon it would appear that the ambassador sought for another interview.

It is reasonable to suppose that the Prussian king resented the insistence of Benedetti. In any event, he

declined to give him a second interview and sent an account of the whole affair in cipher to Bismarck with permission to publish it if he thought best. As fortune would have it, Bismarck was dining with Generals von Moltke and von Roon when the message reached Berlin. He had been previously disappointed when the king refused to allow his relative to consider the proposition of the Spanish throne, since he desired above all to cross swords with France. He had just informed his illustrious dinner guests of his determination to resign as chancellor. This telegram suddenly opened the way for his heart's desire. He perceived that by publishing it with certain omissions, he would simultaneously awaken both Germans and French to wild enthusiasm for war. Nothing unites a state like a foreign war and he now saw a way to solidify his previous work by leading all Germans against France, provided it could be made to appear a war of defense; as to this he took good care.

The telegram, so skillfully altered by omissions, led the French to think their ambassador had been insulted by the Prussian king and cries of "On to Berlin" resounded in Paris. The Germans, by the same announcement, were convinced that the French ambassador had annoyed their king, who was in ill health, on the public promenade of a famous watering place. Upon learning that Frenchmen were calling: "On to Berlin," they saw an opportunity to blot out those inglorious years wherein their counts and kinglets had been mere puppets in the hands of the great military master.

Thus the foolish pride of two nations paved the way for tens of thousands to die in battle or in prison. The folly of the French and the arrogance of the Germans precipitated another act in the long drama which has been enacted by them at intervals since the Treaty of Verdun in 843.

Germany was able to set a million soldiers in the field. Half that number were almost immediately on the march. France did not have more than half a million at best and part of these were in Africa. A hasty mobilization of troops led to incidents that would have been ludicrous had they not been so tragic. When the people clamored for war, the emperor inquired of the war department as to its readiness

for action and was told that "not a button would be needed for a year." There may have been some soldier of which this was true or perhaps some regiment, but for days while Germany was moving forward, the wires were filled with frantic messages of commanders trying to locate their regiments and of officers attempting to obtain supplies. The Germans knew the French must of necessity hold to their railroads from Paris to Alsace and Lorraine. According to the science of war which they had mastered, they could calculate the very hour the French would reach given points and know where their own artillery would be at the same time.

The result might have been forecast by the merest spectator. France sent forth two armies, one under MacMahon, the other commanded by Emperor Napoleon III, an incapable leader. The Germans prevented their consolidation. Over 80,000 men were surrounded at Sedan and taken prisoners—including, as the German reports read: "eighty thousand soldiers, two thousand officers and one emperor." The other army was defeated. Bismarck and Moltke led their triumphant forces on to Paris where a siege was begun, destined to last over four months. The position of the French was impossible from the start and after great suffering from cold and famine, the capital had to surrender. Then the Iron Chancellor reached his apogee of happiness, imposing terms which seemed appalling at the time, although the late war has made all previous indemnities small in comparison. A penalty of one billion dollars was imposed, most of Alsace and Lorraine went to Germany, and bitterest of all, to the raw wound of French pride, the German army made a solemn triumphal march through the streets of Paris. These terms rankled until the tables turned and France after the last war was able to impose penalties yet more severe upon her traditional enemy.

It was thought that 1875 would be the earliest date by which this indemnity could be discharged but it was actually completed by 1873, so heartily did the French detest the quartering of German soldiery within their borders to safeguard payment.

At the first word of Napoleon's surrender, France was proclaimed a republic and a republic she has since remained. Her erstwhile emperor betook himself to England after he was released from the German castle in which he was courteously provided for until the conclusion of the war.

THE EMS DESPATCH

(Original)

Ems, July 13, 1870.

His Majesty the King writes me:

"Count Benedetti intercepted me upon the promenade, in order finally to demand of me in a very pressing manner, that I should authorize him to telegraph immediately that I pledged myself for all the future never again to give my consent, if the Hohenzollerns should renew their candidacy. I refused, at length somewhat decidedly, since one neither can nor should take such an engagement *à tout jamais.* I of course told him that I had not yet received any word, and, since he was earlier informed about Paris and Madrid than I, he could easily see that my government was again out of the game."

His majesty has since received a message from the prince. As his majesty said to Count Benedetti that he was expecting news from the prince, his highness, with reference to the above-mentioned demand, upon the suggestion of Count Eulenberg, and myself, has determined not to receive Count Benedetti again, but only to have him told through an adjutant: That his majesty has now received from the prince confirmation of the news which Benedetti already had from Paris and has nothing further to say to the ambassador.

His majesty leaves with your excellency whether the new demand of Benedetti and its immediate rejection should not be communicated to our ministers and to the press.

*Signed*

ABEKEN.

THE EMS DESPATCH

(Published)

"Ems, July 13, 1870. After the news of the renunciation of the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern had been

officially communicated to the French imperial government by the royal Spanish (government), the French ambassador again presented a demand to his majesty at Ems that he should be authorized to telegraph to Paris that his majesty the king pledges himself for all the the future never again to give his consent if the Hohenzollerns should resume their candidacy. His majesty the king thereupon refused to receive the French minister and had him told through the service-adjutant that his majesty has nothing further to communicate to the French minister."

## THE THIRD REPUBLIC OF FRANCE

IT would seem as though the imposition of five billion francs, the loss of one and one-half millions of citizens in widely surrendered territories and another half million in a disastrous war, with other hardships inseparable from foreign invasion, precipitated a crisis sufficiently difficult for any state to meet; France was destined to add the horrors of civil war to her other misfortunes in 1871.

We have seen how formidable were the Socialists in 1848 and how ruthlessly they were put down then and in the years immediately following. They had gradually rallied from the severe repression. The discomforts of a long siege in Paris, with hunger and privations, had aroused them to fury. They believed that the French army had betrayed the city into the hands of Germany. They were aware that many who had participated in the Provisional Government of National Defense were strongly in favor of a monarchy. The experiences of 1848 had taught the industrial population of Paris that they could not look to the peasants to espouse their cause. Consequently some of their leaders had conceived of an entirely different kind of government as the true solution for their miseries. Instead of a highly centralized republic, a federation of communes was to be established, each autonomous in local affairs.

Whatever might be said in favor of such an experiment, only those whose personal grievances outweighed their sense of obligation to the common weal could have been carried away to wage war for it while the troops of a hostile country—whose statesmen had just imposed a cruel indemnity amounting to twice the expense they had sustained in the late war—still occupied the fortresses. Regardless of the sufferings of the industrial workers of Paris—and these had been grievous and difficult to endure—it is not possible to condone the extreme lengths to which they now went. Organizing what was called the Council General of the Commune of Paris, winning over such members of the

National Guards as were not avowed Socialists, they assumed control of Paris.

The legitimate government unwittingly did something to provoke the radicals. Due to an empty treasury, the National Assembly thought best to stop the daily payment of one and one-half francs to the National Guards and to remove the temporary decrees made necessary by war prohibiting all suits for collection of debts and rentals. At a time when discharged soldiers glutted the market with labor, when industries had been demoralized by the Franco-Prussian war that was scarcely over, while starvation stared the unemployed in the face, their sole means of livelihood was thus removed. A new social system appeared to the Socialists as their only solution, and anarchy was soon rife.

Between the Provisionary Government, engulfed in manifold problems, and this Communist party civil war now broke out and it was to be war to the death. Generally speaking, it was confined to Paris, which now underwent a second siege. The Communists held the capital; the fortifications which the Germans had lately occupied in their sustained effort to take the city now separated one group of belligerent citizens from another.

"The actual military operations, which lasted from April 1 to May 28, 1871, were the usual story of the siege and sacking of a city: the slow advance of the besiegers, who were better disciplined, armed and generaled, the taking of outpost after outpost, the attack on a weak position of the rampart near the St. Cloud gate, the entrance of the Versailles troops, the desperate defense behind the barricades, the capture of one section after another, the firing of public buildings, the assassination of the archbishop, the frantic effort of the conquerors to stay the flames and to exterminate the rebels, the frenzy of the vanquished and the ferocity of the victors, the piles of dead, the ruined buildings and squares, the wholesale massacre of prisoners, the deportations and imprisonments. The number of Parisians killed by French soldiers in the last week of May, 1871, was at least 15,000, and possibly double that number. It was a terrible fate that such a cruel siege and capture of Paris should follow so closely upon the siege and capture

of the city by the Germans, but it was an inevitable aftermath of the trickery and ambition which had precipitated the Franco-German War."[1]

As soon as this frightful experience was ended in the streets—for the trial of insurgents continued for several years—the legitimate government tried to establish order. The most urgent need, after the adjustment of civil war problems was to begin raising the indemnity, the one way of ridding the stricken country of German soldiery. Thiers, above seventy years of age, had been given charge of affairs upon the downfall of the empire and he was continued in power. However, so faint was the general belief that a republic could survive that for several months he was called chief executive, not president. Bismarck had refused to accept a treaty negotiated by the Provisional Government, insisting that it be referred to the people as a whole at a general election for ratification. The deputies elected at this time to a new Assembly were highly conservative and beyond a doubt the majority leaned toward the restoration of a monarchy. The saving element was that they were divided in opinion as to the proper candidate. The Legitimists supported the claims of the grandson of Charles X; the Orleans party naturally looked to the grandson of Louis Philippe; no one manifested any special enthusiasm for a scion of the Bonaparte line. The Republicans were united only in their desire to perpetuate a republic. The whole country was filled with thoughts of revenge toward the hereditary foe beyond the Rhine.

For the eleventh time since 1789, it was necessary to frame a constitution for France. Yet, so convinced were members of the Assembly that it was futile to provide for a republic that not until 1875 was this instrument completed and then it was more or less provisional in character.

The lesson taught by the German War was that it had been suicidal to permit the army to decline. Immediate provision was made for all Frenchmen to spend five years in military service. The active army and active reserve were organized; also the territorial army and reserve. The period of compulsory military service was later lessened to three and then to two years. The late World War restored

a three-year tenure. It has been generally conceded that the ability of the French to withstand the onslaught of the Germans in 1914 was largely due to nearly a half a century of compulsory military discipline for the manhood of the country.

Thiers retired in 1873, having seen prosperity restored to France and the evacuation of the last German troops. The "Liberator of His Country," as he was affectionately called, was advanced in years. He retained a seat in the Assembly throughout the remainder of his life, but his part was no longer conspicuous. Marshal MacMahon, distinguished for his experience in the army, was chosen as Thiers' successor. His selection by the monarchial party was viewed with dismay by the Republicans, for he was an avowed royalist. With his connivance a plot was made to set up Count de Chambord, descendant of Charles X, as king, but this devotee of the old régime, to the disgust of his supporters when all was arranged for a *coup d'etat,* refused to accept the tricolored flag, insisting upon the restoration of the white lilies of the Bourbons. Not even the warmest adherent of the monarchial party would attempt to win the people over to this hated insigne; whereupon the whole affair was dropped.

Although MacMahon was compromised by this matter, he continued at the helm until 1879. Thenceforth the republic was fairly well established, and has endured ever since. From a psychological standpoint, it is curious to find that this last republic, born of sufferance rather than enthusiasm, has survived more than half a century while two previous attempts of the people to establish popular government merged quickly into one-man rule. The gradual disappearance of all who had ever lived under the rule of kings explains it only in part.

After the close of the Franco-Prussian War, with its sequel of civil strife, nothing was so vital as a long period of reconstruction and rest. Until the outbreak of the great World War in 1914, no great statesmen appeared in France. This was perhaps fortunate, since, as a French historian has aptly observed, "great men can make great mistakes." The position of France among the European powers was

humiliating for a nation that had known brilliant eras, for the recent vicissitudes had given rise to a current opinion that nothing more was to be feared from this portion of the continent. Nevertheless, this very indifference of the powers was something of a protection.

The decade after the Franco-Prussian war was one of rapid development for Germany, with the result that various European powers sought alliances with her. France and Russia, disturbed by the growing importance of their neighbor, entered into the Dual Alliance, in 1884. The security this afforded both countries proved rather illusory thirty years later.

The progress of the French in the fields of literature, science, and all departments of industry has been remarkable. So far as events of political significance, nothing since the clash of arms between Teuton and Gaul in 1870 and the events of 1914 caused such an upheaval in France as the far-famed Dreyfus case of 1894. Ordinarily the courtmartial of an officer in the army would awaken only temporary interest in the country concerned and none at all beyond its borders. This particular trial aroused intense concern and much adverse criticism throughout the civilized world. Recent writers have gone so far as to say that without the airing which corrupt military life received in connection with this case, France would not have been sufficiently sound in her military organization to have withstood the shock of the Prussians in the last war. It is this aspect of the matter which justifies its inclusion in this brief review of French political development in modern times, undertaken that we may the better judge of the contributions made by this nation to present-day culture.

The closing years of the nineteenth century witnessed one of those periodic antipathies to Semitics of which the world has seen too many. Feeling in France was pronounced, whether for or against the Jewish monopoly of financial affairs and other characteristic activities of this people. Two years later a sensation was created by the announcement of a discovery that Alfred Dreyfus, captain on the general staff, had sold military secrets to Germany. From the very nature of the case it was necessary to hold

the trial proceedings in secret. In January, 1895, this young officer was degraded of his rank and sentenced for life to Devil's Island, off French Guiana. Two years after, Colonel Picquart, an officer of the secret service, placed before military authorities his reasons for believing that Dreyfus was innocent and that the evidence on which he had been convicted had been "faked" by a Major Esterhazy. He was merely punished for "insubordination," sent off to Tunis and another substituted in his place. This would have probably been the end had it not been that the Dreyfus family would not let the matter subside. In some way the attention of the French novelist, Zola, was enlisted. He was convinced that Dreyfus was a victim of evidence framed by Esterhazy. He publicly accused not only those who had conducted the trial but others who had labored to fan race prejudices. It was felt that the "honor of the army" must be sustained and tremendous pressure from the military was brought to bear, to terminate further proceedings. Zola was tried and convicted of libel. He escaped to England to continue his warfare.

The case finally reached the Court of Cassation in France, where a new trial was ordered. As before, it was conducted by a military tribunal. The officers deeply resented the attention which the public had given to the case and were hostile to Dreyfus, since the pressure which had been exerted was regarded by them as presumptuous. Dreyfus was pronounced guilty but his imprisonment was changed from life to ten years. This was an absurd verdict, for the man was either innocent or guilty. If guilty, the first sentence had not been too severe; if innocent, any punishment was unjust. Thereupon the president of the republic, Loubet, pardoned him—to the relief of the justice-loving world. However, this did not satisfy Dreyfus, since he was still under the shadow of suspicion and his career ruined. The case was once more appealed. Several years were intentionally allowed to elapse, so that public opinion might abate. Then the supreme court reversed the decision, replaced him in the army with the rank he would have earned by time and pronounced Esterhazy guilty.

The whole affair, extending over twelve years, had

proved that those imbued with racial hatred were willing to go to any length to prove their point in discrediting a people; for Esterhazy, safe in England, acknowledged that he had constructed false evidence to prove that Jews were not to be trusted with state concerns. The so-called "honor of the army" prompted officers to sustain one another, even though it meant the punishment of the innocent. Salutary reforms were immediately instituted and while the wide publicity the case had gained brought severe criticism from all sides on the military system, including its judicial affairs, it was constructive in the end and operated for truer standards and broader judgments. In the whole miserable affair, none appeared to better advantage than Zola, whose personal courage never failed him. The Dreyfus fortune, spent unstintingly, had not availed; the honesty of Picquart had terminated in his own disgrace. Only a voice as penetrating as a novelist's, known wherever books are read, could pierce the adamant armor of army pride.

The separation of Church and state in the first years of the twentieth century led to much controversy and bitter animosity. In a way it was linked to the Dreyfus affair. The Catholic Church had stood solidly with the monarchial party, always opposed to the Republican party until at last Pope Leo XIII reproved the political activities of French clerics by publicly stating that the Catholic Church was committed to no particular form of government and that its clergy should respect whatever government the country established. This made little or no difference in the manipulations of certain churchmen in France. Indeed, during the Dreyfus case they had taken the part of the faction opposed to granting the accused a new trial; in other instances they had brought discredit upon themselves. They had invariably acted in concert with those who planned to bring kings back to France. This had naturally won them the hostility of the Republicans.

As a consequence, the disestablishment of the French Catholic Church was begun in 1901 and continued until 1907. It was inevitable that it would antagonize the Curia in Rome and many of the devout in France, while the French

clergy were enraged by the closing of the numerous religious convents, monasteries and nunneries and the suppression of all religious schools. Religious organizations of every kind were placed on equal footing and state funds no longer expended for the compensation of the clergy.

It is idle to attempt to pronounce upon a movement until time has given it a true perspective. Feeling still rankled over this separation of Church and state when the World War began. The unparalleled sacrifices this necessitated cast everything else into obscurity. However, by the generality of people it is usually conceded that complete separation of Church and secular affairs proves most satisfactory in the long run. Nor are Catholics lacking in France who readily admit that the disestablishment of the French Catholic Church has already contributed in no small measure to a better condition, viewed from the spiritual standpoint alone.

[1] Hays: *Modern Europe,* 334.

## HOW FRANCE IS GOVERNED TODAY

"NOTHING in the universe endures save by harmony and order. From the stars, which follow their ordered courses through the immensity of the skies, to the ant, which, in its subterranean galleries, obeys secular instincts—all that is and all that moves is subject to natural laws. If the nation would fulfill its destiny, if it would exercise its sovereignty in the interests of its members, and if it would have the state acquit itself suitably of the thousand functions with which it is entrusted, it must either govern itself or be governed."[1]

Since 1789 one constitution after another has been framed for the government of France. It is interesting to note that the constitution of 1875, which, with subsequent modifications and additional enactments, embodies the present form of government, is neither so lengthy, detailed nor complete as certain earlier instruments, notably the constitution of 1791. Yet, it preserves the spirit of the *Declaration of Rights,* twice formulated, and rests in a measure upon the previous attempts to give republican France a framework for administrative purposes.

Today, France has a President of the Republic, and a Parliament composed of two houses: the Chamber of Deputies and a Senate. The deputies are elected directly by the people; the senators, by electors chosen by popular vote. The unit of French administration is the *commune,* which reaches far back into mediæval times. The National Assembly of 1789 established 44,000 communes of equal rank. Due to changes which have since arisen, there are now 36,225; however, the exact number is subject to change. Each has a mayor and a council. Communes having upwards of five hundred inhabitants have ten councillors who are elected by all regular voters—that is, all Frenchmen having attained their majority and six months residents of their commune—assuming, to be sure, that they have not lost civil rights through criminal acts or become public charges. The council of the commune chooses the

mayor. To be eligible as councilman one must be twenty-five years of age.

Local government is in the hands of the council, which determines the yearly budget and considers matters of general concern. Four meetings are regularly held each year and such additional meetings as the mayor may convene.

In their determination to eradicate the old feudal landmarks, the National Assembly of 1789 swept provincial boundaries off the map of France and divided the country into eighty-three departments. The number has since grown to eighty-seven. Thus it is apparent that several hundred communes may be embraced in one department. The administration of the department rests with a prefect and a council-general. The functions of departmental officers are numerous. The prefect has general supervision of primary education within the department; the council-general considers the construction of roads and bridges, the preservation of order and matters of importance to this territorial division. It may annul acts of mayors of the communes provided they are unconstitutional. In one direction only has the council-general a part in the affairs of the state: its members, with others, elect members to the Senate.

In regard to the administration of the country as a whole, the executive power rests with the president and his ministers; the legislative power, with the two chambers.

At the present time, the Chamber of Deputies contains 584* members, who serve four years. Candidates must be twenty-five years of age. The Senate is made up of 300 members, and is conceived as a conservative body, designed to check hasty legislation. Therefore older men of riper experience are chosen for this capacity. They must be forty years of age and they serve for nine years.

When a new president is to be chosen for the republic, the two chambers go into joint meeting at Versailles, constituting a National Assembly. Candidates are not discussed at this meeting but members file past an urn into which they drop their ballots. One ballot after another is taken until a majority of votes determines the incoming president.

Amendments and modifications to the constitution may

be made also by the chambers acting in capacity of National Assembly.

Ministerial government is established in France, as in England. The president, like the British sovereign, is absolved from political responsibility while the ministers are directly responsible to parliament in both nations. The president can never appear on the floor of either chamber in France. Such measures as he desires to bring before the law-makers are either incorporated in a message or presented by a minister. The president of France is chosen for a term of seven years and is eligible to reëlection. He does not have power of veto as has the president of the United States; but he may refer an enactment back to the chambers for reconsideration. If passed a second time, he is bound to promulgate it regardless of personal favor or disfavor.

The French president represents the nation in foreign affairs and although the approval of the chambers is essential to the conclusion of treaties, his power in foreign affairs is wide. However, he cannot declare war without the consent of parliament. This issue was long debated by the members of the Constituent Assembly in 1791. The Socialistic constitution of 1795 required a referendum to the people on this issue, so eager were the people to be rid of ruler-made wars which had long oppressed them.

It has already been explained that the prostrate condition of France in 1871 seemed so unpromising to the assembly chosen by universal suffrage to frame a new constitution that in February members were unwilling to do more than elect Thiers as chief executive. Not until August was he reluctantly given the title of president. In 1873 and 1874 motions to declare France a republic were lost and finally, when it was perceived that the people generally were preparing to elect a Republican majority to the assembly, the matter was adjusted in a round-about way. Afraid to risk the defeat which had befallen every previous effort to declare France a republic, a member of the assembly by the name of Walloon introduced a resolution defining the manner in which the president should be chosen. "The president of the republic is elected by an absolute majority

of suffrages by the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies united as a National Assembly. He is appointed for seven years and he is reëligible." Curiously enough, since this contained nothing new or compromising, it was adopted. In passing it, the assembly inadvertently committed itself to several premises: first, that France was a republic and had a president as its chief executive officer. These long disputed points being once declared, other enactments were passed to shape a government for this unwillingly conceded republic.

In 1884 it was enacted that the National Assembly shall at no time consider changing the form of government from that of a republic.

The years following the birth of the third republic were reconstructional in character. No president evinced sufficient statesmanship to demand special treatment in a cursory review. Then came the war, whose dangers were alarming enough to rouse the best mentality of the nation. Clemenceau, Poincaré and other world-famed characters, whose supreme abilities were exerted for their country, whether during the war or since, need no introduction to the generality of readers, since their names have become household words.

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[1] Poincare: *French Government,* 147. Those desiring a detailed account of the present administrative system of France are referred to this lucid treatise, which reviews the history of commune, succeeding constitutions and allied subjects.

*The number has been 610 but is subject to change.

## LITERARY MOVEMENTS

BEFORE entering upon a consideration of nineteenth century literature in France, it is instructive to take a cursory survey of those movements of modern times which have made themselves felt not alone in the domain of letters but in architecture, painting, music and even in social institutions—not only in France but throughout the civilized world.

During the fifteenth century a classical revival began in Italy, known as the Renaissance. Many factors must be taken into account to explain its appearance. Discoveries, explorations and travel had broadened the minds of men; the recovery of ancient manuscripts made it possible to replace imperfect copies of Greek and Latin writings by more accurate versions; the weakening of authority encouraged scholars to undertake research and no longer hold themselves in bondage to the opinions of others. Numerous other forces were at work to give this "re-birth" vitality and importance.

From Italy the Renaissance spread throughout Europe, expressing itself according to the temperament of nations to whom it came. During the sixteenth century it penetrated France, stimulating mental activity and literary expression.

Here, as elsewhere, renewed interest in antiquity brought a reaction in favor of Greco-Latin models, at the same time casting discredit upon whatever the Middle Ages had produced. In their keen enthusiasm for the learning of the past, men condemned all that was mediæval as "Gothic," or barbaric. Poets adopted not only the style but the themes of classical times; playwrights delineated heroes rather than men.

Thus was inaugurated the so-called classical movement, destined to survive for wellnigh three hundred years. In the sixteenth century Ronsard and others of the Plćiade endeavored to establish classical rules in France. Infatuated by the writings of Greeks and Romans, writers not

only imitated them but borrowed unstintingly from them. Gradually restraint and moderation came to be recognized as dominating Greek attributes, and these excellent qualities were cultivated by those of discernment.

Under the severe discipline which Boileau imposed upon his age, classical ideas came to be better understood in the seventeenth century. Style was no longer obscure. With the establishment of the French Academy and the subsequent publication of a dictionary, literary language was duly formulated—although, as we shall see, pedantic ruling robbed it of much richness and vigor.

The eighteenth century saw the enthronement of *reason* with everything subjected to its scrutiny. Whatever met its tests was deemed worthy; whatever failed to satisfy its searchings was discarded. All literary expression was governed by laws, which, like those of the Medes and Persians, altered not. To be acceptable, an epic had to satisfy twenty-three distinct rules; comedy, twenty-two. It will be remembered that the great Corneille withdrew from Paris for several years after the committee appointed by the French Academy censured him for violating classical rules, particularly the one of the "three unities." Unmindful of the fact that the manner of dramatic presentation made it incumbent upon ancient Greeks to preserve unity of time, place and action, this regulation, recorded by Aristotle, became binding upon people two thousand years later living under wholly different conditions. Even Molière felt himself bound by it and as a matter of fact, in the early nineteenth century, Goethe said of Byron that, while he defied all other laws, human and divine, he still, apparently, regarded himself obliged to observe the law of the "three unities."

The so-called "cult for antiquity" resulted in the gradual suppression of all that was natural, spontaneous, and vital. "Classic authors considered the world as an ensemble of fixed relations having no disturbing elements in their complexity, and ordained by superior wisdom according to invariable laws. . . . All classic writers find their masters in antiquity. No one has either the absurd pretension to vie with Greek or Roman models, or the extravagant desire to

do otherwise than to imitate them. In this way only can perfection be obtained."[1]

The conventional was exalted; the individual was suppressed. Order, regularity, uniformity became criterions of excellence. We have but to call to mind the two most distinguished classical poets of England—Dryden and Pope—to recognize the artificiality of classicism.

Rousseau heralded the dawn of a new day. Even before the revolution had swept away the old order of government and set up a new system of political and social life, his had been a voice crying in the wilderness. Disdaining all convention, he had exhorted men to "return to nature." At a time when it was thought both insolent and uncivil to set one's self apart from others, he spoke out boldly in the first person: "I felt"; "I saw"; "I suffered." When simple domestic joys were regarded as inappropriate for a writer's descriptive pen—indeed, when among the upper classes they had given way before intrigue and moral laxity—this exponent of the "natural man" did not hesitate to relate every incident of childhood that memory preserved to him.

Readers of Plato recall the numerous schools of philosophy that were based upon the teachings of Socrates. Although the immortal Athenian left no writings, it was remembered he had said that whoever needs little, cannot want; he had conceded good to be pleasurable; he interrogated men in order to arrive at basic truths. He held that one should triumph over the intoxication of joy as well as the poignancy of pain. Seizing upon single threads of his philosophy, the Cynics made poverty a virtue; carrying another precept to excess, the Cyrenaics proclaimed pleasure to be the *only* good; the Sceptics, no longer content to pursue knowledge by inquiry, denied the possibility of attaining it at all; while the Stoics revered merely the hardihood of the great teacher.

Approaching French romanticism, one observes a somewhat similar situation. The movement owed much to Rousseau, to whose doctrines it can easily be traced. But what a variety of interpretations romanticism was given by its adherents! Rousseau's love of nature laid hold of one; his exaltation of the ego, of another; his abandonment

of convention appealed to a third, and so on, *ad infinitum*.

Wright has pointed out the difficulty of defining this movement which was destined to work such changes in literature and fine arts before it gave way, in the second half of the nineteenth century, to realism.

"One will tell you that it is an 'awakening of the poetic faculty'; another that it is a 'social phenomenon characterized by a tendency to individualism and, therefore, expressed in lyric form'; others, 'an expansion of the ego' . . . Defining it again by contrast with the classicism it replaces, it is called the revolution of the modern spirit in literature following the political revolution of 1789; or, it is said that, as classicism seeks to express beauty through order, so romanticism seeks beauty through disorder; that classicism is the literature of the reason and romanticism the literature of the imagination; that classicism represents man and romanticism represents men."[2]

If it is difficult exactly to define romanticism, at least it is not hard to understand what it accomplished. It swept into the discard the artificiality of classicism and gave free rein to the imagination. Sentiment was permitted a place in the human scheme and no longer did cold reason put adventure to flight. It touched the hearts of poets and Byron, Keats and Shelley broke into song. It made it possible for men to reconstruct the past, imbuing it with life and vitality—whether on the pages of history or in the glowing stories of Walter Scott. It is doubtful if any great creator, born since the dawn of romanticism, has not been affected by its magic spell. To be sure, the tenets of realism have tended to correct the excesses of romanticism but realist and naturalist owe much to its liberalizing influence.

If Rousseau be regarded as grandfather of this movement, Chateaubriand must be conceded to be its father.

The Napoleonic period was barren of achievement in French literature, for a strict censorship was exercised over the press and those who would not yield to imperial mandates were exiled. It was in exile that Madame de Staël made her contributions to the future, not only in her writings but more especially by doing much to break down the

artificial barriers that prevented free exchange of ideas among men of letters. Whereas the Renaissance had come from the south of Europe, Madame de Staël perceived that romanticism made headway in Germany. She visited Weimar, that literary center of Germany where Goethe, Schiller and Herder were engaged upon works of which her own countrymen knew nothing. Somewhat overwhelmed by the voluble French woman, none of these celebrated writers grieved when she withdrew from their midst. Yet, when her book on Germany finally saw the light, it was Goethe who wrote: "That work on Germany which owed its origin to such social conversations must be looked upon as a mighty implement, whereby in the Chinese wall of antiquated prejudices that separated us from France, a broad gap was broken; so that across the channel, our neighbors at last took closer knowledge of us; and now the whole remote west is open to our influence."

No writer had a greater influence upon the literature of the early nineteenth century than Chateaubriand, although, apart from students, it is safe to say that only here and there will be found a reader who is familiar with him today. Unlike Madame de Staël, so far as government was concerned Chateaubriand looked to the past, hoping for a restoration of the monarchy. Under the restored Bourbons he served in diplomatic ways. After the establishment of the bourgeois Louis Philippe, he withdrew from public life and died in obscurity.

Francois René de Chateaubriand was born in Brittany, in 1768. To understand his prevailing melancholy, one needs to search his own story, *René*, for a description of that lonely old castle in which his childhood was spent with little companionship save that of his sister Lucile. These two were the youngest of a family of ten children. The father was morose and abstracted, encompassed by an air of mystery. The mother was absorbed in religious contemplation. It would seem that little heed was given to these susceptible children, whose early years were spent where the wind moaned around the turrets and the ocean sobbed through stormy nights; where the sea-fowl screeched and fogs made the place depressing for sensitive souls. Lucile

Street Scene, Strasbourg, Alsace-Lorraine

The Roofs and Courts of Strasbourg As Seen from the Top of the Cathedral

had two passions: religion and her brother. She finally committed suicide and her brother seriously contemplated following her example.

Saint-Pierre had given his story, *Paul and Virginia*, a setting in the new world. Thither Chateaubriand came in 1791. He visited the eastern coast and Great Lakes district, attempting to gain some idea of Indian life. It is reasonable to suppose that he never saw the valley of the Mississippi river since his tropical descriptions of the region near its mouth are highly amusing if considered merely from the standpoint of accuracy. From a vast amount of material collected during the months spent in America, Chateaubriand ultimately used only two episodes, related in *Atala* and *René*. The discrepancy between real Indians and those depicted in *Les Natchez* is apparent to even the casual reader and his romances show a curious mingling of savagery and culture. However, his long descriptions of scenery and his spirit of adventure place the author in the van of the new movement which he shaped to a considerable extent.

Chateaubriand is remembered as a critic and as a writer of two books on Christianity: the *Genius of Christianity* and *The Martyrs*. Most of all, he is remembered as a consummate artist who captivates by his imaginative powers. As has been said, the religious feelings that he awakens are those born of soft light seen through stained glass windows, of the fragrance of incense and strains of music, poetical and sensuous emotions stimulated by the artist by means of pleasing image.

"The author of *le Genie du christianisme* and *les Martyrs* does not convince the understanding; he arouses sensibility, dazzles the imagination. . . . In reality his religion is but æstheticism, and his æsthetics are those of a purely artistic nature, delighting, above all things, in grandeur and harmony."[3]

Chateaubriand did not wholly break with classicism. He was by far too ardent an admirer of Greek culture for that. Preserving what was best in the old, he directed attention to the untold possibilities of romanticism.

After Chateaubriand's death his *Memoires d'utre-tombe* (memoirs from beyond the tomb) were published. In some respects this work contains his most mature and discriminating opinions.

[1] Pellistier: *Literary Movement in France in Nineteenth Century*, 4, 6.
[2] Wright: *History of French Literature*, 652.
[3] Pellistier, 74.

## MADAME DE STAËL

"Other salonieres made their salons their world. It was only this one who attempted to make the world her salon."

IN Madame de Staël we find characteristics of those transitional years that bridged the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She had been called the first "new woman"; however, she wasted no time demanding *rights* but took them for granted. Her unusual career is to be explained partly in her inheritances and partly by her earily environment.

Anne Louise Germaine Necker was born in April, 1766. Her mother, Suzanne Curchod, was famous for her beauty, sparkling wit and social popularity. At one time she was betrothed to Gibbon, the English historian; his father having objected to the match, the engagement was broken off, although it is safe to say that Suzanne never wholly forgot the lover of her youth. Subsequently she went to Paris where she met Necker, the Genevan banker who had been summoned to France to bring some order out of the chaotic condition of national finances. The beautiful Suzanne and Jacques Necker were presently married and Germaine was their only child.

The mother found some consolation for her lost romance in the great fortune with which this marriage endowed her. She established a salon where the gifted met to discuss important matters, for coming events were already casting their fitful shadows, discerned by those of sufficient acumen and sensed even more surely by the intuitive. Madame Necker was aware of the slights which proud aristocrats put upon her but her husband's high position made her comparatively free of those who regarded her as an "upstart stranger." However, it is plain that she was ever restless—never quite at ease at the capital.

Germaine resembled her Teutonic father rather than her attractive mother. Her features, rather coarse, were redeemed by a pair of big black eyes, which burned like vol-

canoes. Hers was a passionate nature and few were able to resist the impelling power of these dark orbs when fixed upon them with the intensity of her being.

When a child of ten and thenceforward Germaine was to be seen in her mother's salon, listening to the spirited conversations that perpetually went on in this beautiful mansion. Nothing escaped her and when still of tender years her poise and quick repartee amazed those who beheld her. She was a devout admirer of Rousseau and at the age of eighteen wrote her *Letters on Jean Jacques Rousseau.* While yet in her teens she had ardent love affairs with men who assembled to converse with her parents and who seem from their correspondence to have regarded her with amused indulgence.

At the age of twenty she was married to the Baron de Staël-Holstein, a Swedish ambassador, seventeen years her senior. She was the richest heiress of Europe; while her husband's position established her at the Swedish Embassy where her salon immediately became a popular resort. There is no evidence that she felt anything but a respectful regard for her husband although it would appear that he was genuinely attracted to his brilliant young wife. Following the unconventional custom of the times, she soon had several devoted lovers sighing around her and seems to have viewed her marriage as no impediment to numerous affairs of the heart.

Three years later the black clouds broke which had been for some time rolling ominously over France and the storm descended in all its fury. Madame de Staël lingered in Paris until 1792 and then barely escaped with her life to Switzerland, to the estate known as Coppet which became the rendezvous for many of the émigrés. Germaine adored her father but had early overshadowed her less assertive mother. Necker had repaired to Coppet after his downfall, awaiting a time when he might find himself restored to the confidence of the French people. During the period of the Revolution, Tallyrand, Narbonne and Benjamin Constant each in turn held sway in Germaine's passionate heart, for existence was impossible to her without at least one ardent lover.

After Napoleon set his firm hand upon the helm of state, Mme. de Staël did everything in her power to attract his notice and win his favor. When at last his repeated slights convinced her that so far as she was concerned, his heart was adamant, she completely reversed her attitude and was thereafter his tireless enemy.

Napoleon has often been criticised for having "persecuted" Madame de Staël. As a matter of fact, he seems to have had no desire to submit to her dominance, preferring to leave her entirely alone. This being intolerable to her, she continued her attempts to force herself upon his notice. When he was persuaded that her salon was a hotbed of opposition to his scheme for making him supreme in France and conqueror of Europe, he exiled her to Switzerland. Such isolation from the world of events was insufferable to this active spirit who longed to be in the thick of the fray. "In Paris one lives: elsewhere one vegetates." Such was her verdict and she bemoaned the "infernal quiet" of Coppet. Madame de Staël was past-master in the art of conversation and was wretched unless she had around her an admiring audience. Her attitude toward the peace and quiet of the country calls to mind that of Dr. Johnson, English conversationalist of far-famed ability, who, when invited to accompany a friend in a rural walk returned: "Sir, when you have seen one lane, you have seen all lanes. I like men. Come, let us walk down Piccadilly."

With feminine inconsistence, Madame de Staël wrote and agitated against the great Napoleon and then entreated him to permit her to return to the capital. Maintaining that he had no heart, she nevertheless tried to appeal to it. Time after time she violated the order that she should not come within forty leagues of Paris and it was only after she had taken chances that no man would have dared to take, depending upon her sex to protect her, that she was banished to Coppet with instructions to remain there.

Of course this prompted her to "run the blockade" and escape to Austria, going later to Russia and Sweden. During the Revolution she had spent some months in Germany, visiting England during the Napoleonic campaign.

Whenever she traveled, she was greeted with enthu-

siasm. To be sure, she was something of a curiosity in Germany, Russia or Sweden, where such a type of woman was unknown. Schiller said that after conversing with her, he felt as if he were convalescing from a long illness. She bade Fichte to give her a summary of his philosophy in "about fifteen minutes." After he had talked ten minutes she stopped him, claiming that she comprehended it perfectly although he had spent his life in developing the system. Familiarity with the subject under discussion was of small consequence to her, since she grasped much intuitively and guessed at the rest. The one thing vital to her was to talk and never to cease talking. In her novel *Corinne,* she wrote: "These and other discussions were spiritedly put forth by Corinne; she equally understood the art of that light and rapid style, which insists on nothing—in her wish to please, adopting each by turns, though frequently abandoning herself to the talent which had rendered her so celebrated as an improvisatrice. . . . But she spoke so well that all her auditors listened with delight, and could not have endured an interruption." In passages such as this her readers saw Madame de Staël portrayed under the personation of the heroine.

*Delphine* was written during her early life. *Corinne* was the maturer effort. Neither romance is widely read today, yet neither lacked enthusiastic readers in her generation. Her masterpiece was the treatise concerning Germany and the Germans, embodying the author's observations and reflections during her sojourn in that country. Needless to say, it was superficial—for her biographers are at loss to account for her opportunity to write, so engrossed was she with the passing moment. However, she possessed keen penetration and divined much. The intercourse between France and Germany was comparatively slight at the time and neither nation knew intimately the literature of the other.

It is difficult to estimate the influence of this woman, in whom the ego was so abnormally developed, on contemporary thought. To those who think of Napoleon as an unmitigated evil, whatever operated against him and helped to undermine his power appears to have been a blessing. Yet

who can doubt that, despite the nettling activities of Madame de Staël, the result would have been the same?

"Madame de Staël took her own generation by storm. She inspired everywhere an enthusiasm of love or hatred. There was no medium. The time is not yet come when she can be regarded with that cold and disinterested eye which is supposed to search out truth. Her ample and vivid personality still takes one in possession. Her rush of words, her rush of feeling, her inimitable intellectual daring, her supreme conceit and her strong passions, leave the beholder breathless, astonished and in a frame of mind essentially unjudicial. . . . Take refuge with her from the battle of life without? She was herself a battle. Her love was a torrent of generous and undisciplined emotion. 'If she gives herself up to her impetuous nature,' said Benjamin Constant, 'there is a commotion like a thunder-storm or an earthquake. . . . Did she but know how to govern herself, she could govern the world.' That is her whole character summed up in little."[1]

Madame de Staël had an abiding faith in the "perfectibility" of human nature and her optimism was infectious. She realized that however powerful might be the forces of nationalism, so far as ideas were concerned, all the world must be kin. Her part in informing her countrymen as to the importance of what was being thought and said in other lands was productive of rich result. Her services in this respect were of more consequence than her literary endeavors.

[1] Tallentyre: *Women of the Salons*, 130.

## From CORINNE

Travelling, say what you will, is one of the saddest pleasures in life. If you ever feel at ease in a strange place, it is because you have begun to make it your home; but to traverse unknown lands, to hear a language which you hardly comprehend, to look on faces unconnected with either your past or future, this is solitude without repose or dignity; for the hurry to arrive where no one awaits you, that agitation whose sole cause is curiosity, lessens you in your own esteem, while, ere new objects can become old, they have bound you by some sweet link of sentiment and habit.

Oswald felt his despondency redoubled in crossing Germany to reach Italy, obliged by war to avoid France and its frontiers, as well as the troops, who rendered the roads impassable. This necessity for attending to detail and taking almost every instant a new resolution was utterly insufferable. His health, instead of improving, often obliged him to stop, while he longed to arrive at some other place, or at least to fly from where he was. He took the least possible care of his constitution; accusing himself as culpable, with but too great severity. If he wished still to live, it was but for the defense of his country.

"My native land," he would sigh, "has it not a parental right over me? but I want power to serve it usefully. I must not offer it the feeble existence which I drag toward the sun, to beg of him some principle of life that may struggle against my woes. None but a father could receive me thus and love me the more, the more I was deserted by nature and by fate."

He had flattered himself that a continual change of external object would somewhat divert his fancy from its usual routine; but he could not, at first, realize this effect. It were better, after any great loss, to familiarize ourselves afresh with all that had surrounded us, accustom ourselves to the old familiar faces, to the house in which we had lived and the daily duties which we ought to resume; each of these efforts jars fearfully on the heart; but nothing multiplies them like an absence.

Oswald's only pleasure was exploring the Tyrol on a horse which he had brought from Scotland and who climbed the hills at a gallop. The astonished peasants began by shrieking with fright, as they saw him borne along the precipice's edge, and ended by clapping their hands in admiration of his dexterity, grace and courage. He loved the sense of danger. It reconciled him for the instant with that life which he thus seemed to regain and which it would have been easy to lose.

* * * *

Oswald awoke in Rome. The dazzling sun of Italy met his first gaze and his soul was penetrated with sensations of love and gratitude for that heaven which seemed to smile on him in these glorious beams. He heard the bells of numerous churches ringing, discharges of cannon from various distances, as if announcing some high solemnity. He inquired the cause and was informed that the most celebrated woman was about that morning to be crowned at the capitol—Corinne, the poet and improvisatrice, one of the loveliest women of Rome. He asked some questions respecting this ceremony, hallowed by the names of Petrarch and of Tasso; every reply he received warmly excited his curiosity.

There can be nothing more hostile to the habits and opinions of an Englishman than any great publicity given to the career of a woman. But the enthusiasm with which all imaginative talents inspire the Italians, infects at least for the time, even strangers, who forget prejudice itself among people so lively in the expression of their sentiments.

The common populace of Rome discuss their statues, pictures, monuments and antiquities with much taste; and literary merit, carried to a certain height, becomes with them a national interest.

On going forth into the public resorts, Oswald found that the streets through which Corinne was to pass had been adorned for her reception. The herd, who generally throng but the path of fortune or of power, were almost in a tumult of eagerness to look on one whose soul was her

only distinction. In the present state of the Italians the glory of the fine arts is all their fate allows them; and they appreciate genius of that order with a vivacity which might raise up a host of great men, if applause could suffice to produce them—if a hardy life, strong interest and an independent station were not the food required to nourish thought.

Oswald walked the streets of Rome, awaiting the arrival of Corinne; he heard her name every instant; every one related some new trait, proving that she united all the talents most captivating to the fancy. One asserted that her voice was the most touching in Italy; another, that in tragic acting she had no peer; a third, that she danced like a nymph and drew with equal grace and invention—all said that no one had ever written or extemporized verses so sweet, and that in daily conversation she displayed alternately an ease and an eloquence which fascinated all who heard her. They disputed as to which part of Italy had given her birth; some earnestly contending that she must be a Roman, or she could not speak the language with such purity. Her family name was unknown. Her first work, which had appeared five years since, bore but that of Corinne. No one could tell where she had lived, nor what she had been before that period; and she was now nearly six-and-twenty. Such mystery and publicity, united in the fate of a female of whom every one spoke, yet whose real name no one knew, appeared to Nevil as among the wonders of the land he came to see. He would have judged such a woman very severely in England; but he applied not *her* social etiquettes to Italy; and the crowning of Corinne awoke in his breast the same sensation which he would have felt on reading an adventure of Ariosto's.

A burst of exquisite melody preceded the approach of the triumphal procession. How thrilling is each event that is heralded by music! A great number of Roman nobles and not a few foreigners came first.

"Behold her retinue of admirers!" said one.

"Yes," replied another, "she receives a whole world's homage, but accords her preference to none. She is rich, independent; it is even believed from her noble air that she

is a lady of high birth, who wishes to remain unknown."

"A divinity veiled in clouds," concluded a third.

Oswald looked on the man who spoke thus; everything betokened him a person of the humblest class; but the natives of the South converse as naturally in poetic phrases as if they imbibed them with the air or were inspired by the sun.

At last four spotless steeds appeared in the midst of the crowd drawing an antiquely-shaped car, beside which walked a maiden band in snowy vestments. Wherever Corinne passed perfumes were thrown upon the air; the windows, decked with flowers and scarlet hangings, were peopled by gazers who shouted: "Long live Corinne! Glory to beauty and to genius!"

This emotion was general; but to partake it one must lay aside English reserve and French raillery; Nevil could not yield to the spirit of the scene, till he beheld Corinne.

Attired like Domenichino's Sibyl, an Indian shawl was twined among her lustrous black curls, a blue drapery fell over her robe of virgin white, and her whole costume was picturesque without sufficiently varying from modern usage to appear tainted by affectation. Her attitude was noble and modest; it might, indeed, be perceived that she was content to be admired; yet a timid air blended with her joy and seemed to ask pardon for her triumph. The expression of her features, her eyes, her smile, created a solicitude in her favor and made Lord Nevil her friend even before any more ardent sentiment subdued him. Her arms were transcendently beautiful; her figure tall, and, as we frequently see among the Grecian statues, rather robust, energetically characteristic of youth and happiness. There was something inspired in her air; yet the very manner in which she bowed her thanks for the applause she received betrayed a natural disposition sweetly contrasting the pomp of her extraordinary situation. She gave you at the same instant the idea of a priestess of Apollo advancing toward his temple and of a woman born to fulfill the usual duties of life with perfect simplicity—in truth, her every gesture elicited not more wondering conjecture, than it conciliated sympathy and affection. The nearer she

approached the capitol, so fruitful in classic associations, the more these admiring tributes increased; the raptures of the Romans, the clearness of their sky, and above all, Corinne herself took electric effect on Oswald. He had often in his own land seen statesmen drawn in triumph by the people, but this was the first time that he had ever witnessed the tender of such honors to a woman illustrious only in mind. Her car of victory cost no fellow-mortal's tear; nor terror nor regret could check his admiration for those fairest gifts of nature—creative fancy, sensibility and reason. These new ideas so intensely occupied him, that he noticed none of the long-famed spots over which Corinne proceeded. At the foot of the steps leading to the capitol the car stopped and all her friends rushed to offer their hands; she took that of Prince Castel Forte, the nobleman most esteemed in Rome for his talents and character. Every one approved her choice. She ascended to the capitol, whose imposing majesty seemed graciously to welcome the light footsteps of woman. The instruments sounded with fresh vigor, the cannon shook the air, and the all-conquering Sibyl entered the palace prepared for her reception. . . .

The senator took the crown of bays and myrtle he was to place on the brow of Corinne. She removed the shawl which had bound the ebon curls that now fell about her shoulders, and advanced with an air of pleased thankfulness, which she strove not to dissemble. Again she knelt; but not in trepidation as at first. She had just spoken; had filled her soul with godlike images; enthusiasm had surmounted timidity; she was no longer the shrinking maid but the inspired vestal who exultingly devoted herself to the worship of genius.

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Our lovers commenced their route by the ruins of Pompeii. Both were silent, for the decisive moment now drew nigh; and the vague hope so long enjoyed, so accordant with the clime, was about to give place to yet unknown reality. Pompeii is the most curious ruin of antiquity. In Rome, one hardly finds any wrecks, save those of public works, associated with the political changes of bygone cen-

turies. In Pompeii, you retrace the private life of the ancients. The volcano which buried it in ashes preserved it from decay. No edifices, exposed to the air, could thus have lasted. Pictures and bronzes keep their primal beauty, while all domestic implements remain in over-awing perfection. The amphoras are still decked for the morrow's festival. The flour that was to have been kneaded into cakes is yet there; the remains of a female are adorned for this interrupted fete, her fleshless arm no longer filling the jeweled bracelet that yet hangs about it. Nowhere else can one behold such proofs of death's abrupt invasion. The track of wheels is visible in the streets; and the stonework of the wells bears the marks of the cords that had worn away their edges by degrees. On the walls of the guard-room are seen the ill-formed letters and rudely-sketched figures which the soldiers had scrawled to beguile their time, while Time himself was striding to devour them. When, from the midst of the cross-roads, you see all sides of the town, nearly as it existed of yore, you seem to expect that some one will come from these masterless dwellings; this appearance of life renders the eternal silence of the place still more appalling. Most of the houses are built of lava, and fresh lava destroyed them. The epochs of the world are counted from fall to fall. The thought of human beings, toiling by the light that consumed them, fills the breast with melancholy. How long it is since man first lived, suffered, and died! Where can we find the thoughts of the departed? Do they still float around these ruins, or are they gathered forever to the heaven of immortality? A few scorched manuscripts, which were partly unrolled at Portici, are all that is left us of these victims to earthquake and volcano. But in drawing near such relics we dread to breathe, lest we should scatter with their dust the noble ideas perhaps impressed on it. The public buildings, even of Pompeii, which was one of the smallest Italian towns, are very handsome. The splendor of the ancients seemed always intended for the general good. Their private houses are small, and decked but by a taste for the fine arts. Their interiors possess agreeable pictures and tasteful mosaic pavements; on many of them, near the door-

sill, is inlet the word *Salve.* This salutation was not surely one of simple politeness, but an invitation to hospitality. The rooms are remarkably narrow, with no windows toward the street, nearly all of them opening into a portico, or the marble court round which the rooms are constructed; in its center is a simply elegant cistern. It is evident that the inhabitants lived chiefly in the open air, and even received their friends there. Nothing can give a more luxurious idea of life than a climate which throws man into the bosom of nature. Society must have meant something very different in such habits from what it is where the cold confines men within doors. We better appreciate the dialogues of Plato, while beholding the porticos beneath which the ancients passed half of their day. They were incessantly animated by the beauteous sky. Social order, they conceived, was not the barren combination of fraud and force, but a happy union of institutions that excite the faculties and develop the mind, making man's object the perfection of himself and his fellow-creatures. Antiquity inspires insatiable curiosity. The learned, employed solely on collections of names which they call history, were surely devoid of all imagination. But to penetrate the past, interrogate the human heart through many ages; to seize on a fact in a word and on the manners or character of a nation in a fact, to re-enter the most distant time, in order to conceive how the earth looked in its youth and in what way men supported the life which civilization has since rendered so complicated; this were a continual effort of imagination, whose guesses discover secrets that study and reflection cannot reveal. Such occupation was particularly attractive to Nevil, who often told Corinne that if he had not nobler interests to serve in his own land, he could not endure to live away from this. We should at least regret the glory we cannot obtain. Forgetfulness alone degrades the soul, which can ever take refuge in the past when deprived of a present purpose.

Leaving Pompeii they proceeded to Portici, whose inhabitants beset them with loud cries of "Come and see the mountain!" Thus they designate Vesuvius. Has it need of name? It is their glory, their country is celebrated as the

shrine of this marvel. Oswald begged Corinne to ascend in a sort of palanquin to the Hermitage of St. Salvadore, which is half-way up and the usual resting-place for travelers. He rode by her side to overlook her bearers, and the more his heart filled with the generous sentiments such scenes inspire the more he adored Corinne. The country at the foot of Vesuvius is the most favored by heaven in all Europe. The celebrated *Lacryma Christi* vine flourishes beside land totally devastated by lava, as if nature here made a last effort and resolved to perish in her richest array. As you ascend you turn to gaze on Naples and on the fair land around it—the sea sparkles in the sun as if strewn with jewels; but all the splendors of creation are extinguished by degrees as you enter the region of ashes and of smoke, that announces your approach to the volcano. The iron waves of other years have traced their large black furrows in the soil. At a certain height birds are no longer seen, farther on plants become very scarce, then even insects find no nourishment. At last all life disappears, you enter the realm of death and the slain earth's dust alone slips beneath your unassured feet.

"Never doth swain nor cowboy thither lead the flocks or herds."

A hermit lives betwixt the confines of life and death. One tree, the last farewell to vegetation, stands before his door and beneath the shade of its pale foliage are travelers wont to wait the night ere they renew their course; for during the day the fires and lava, so fierce when the sun is set, look dark beneath his splendor. This metamorphose is in itself a glorious sight, which every eve renews the wonder that a continual glare might weaken.

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The power of the Venetian government, during its latter years, has almost entirely consisted in the empire of habit and association of ideas. It once was formidably daring—it has become lenient and timorous; hate of its past potency is easily revived, and easily subdued, by the thoughts that its might is over. The aristocracy woo the favor of the people, and yet by a kind of despotism, since they rather amuse than enlighten them; an agreeable state enough,

while the common herd are afforded no pleasures that can brutify their minds, while the government watches over its subjects like a sultan over his harem, forbidding them to meddle with politics, or presume to form any judgment of existing authorities, but allowing them sufficient diversion, and not a little glory. The spoils of Constantinople enrich the churches; the standards of Cyprus and Candia float over the Piazza; the Corinthian horses delight the eye; and the winged lion of St. Mark's appears the type of fame. The situation of the city rendering agriculture and the chase impossible, nothing is left for the Venetians but dissipation. Their dialect is soft and light as a zephyr. One can hardly conceive how the people who resisted the league of Cambray should speak so flexible a tongue; it is charming, while expressive of graceful pleasantry, but suits not graver themes; verses on death, for instance, breathed in these delicate and almost infantine accents, sound more like the descriptions of poetic fable. The Venetians are the most intelligent men in Italy; they think more deeply, though with less ardent fancies, than their southern countrymen; yet, for the most part, the women, though very agreeable, have acquired a sentimentality of language, which, without restraining their morals, merely lends their gallantry an air of affectation. There is more vanity, as there is more society, here, than in the rest of Italy. Where applause is quick and frequent conceit calculates all debts instantaneously; knows what success is owed, and claims its due without giving a minute's credit. Its bills must be paid at sight. Still, much originality may be found in Venice. Ladies of the highest rank receive visits in the *cafes,* and this strange confusion prevents their *salons* becoming the arenas of serious self-love. There yet remain here some ancient usages that evince a respect for their forefathers, and a certain youth of heart which tires not of the past nor shrinks from melting recollections. The sight of the city itself is always sufficient to awaken a host of memories. The Piazza is crowded by blue tents, beneath which rest Turks, Greeks and Armenians, who sometimes also loll carelessly in open boats, with stands of flowers at their feet. St. Mark's, too, looks rather like a mosque

than a Christian temple; and its vicinity gives a true idea of the oriental indolence with which life is spent here in drinking sherbet and smoking perfumed pipes.

Men and women of quality never leave their houses, except in black mantles; while the gondolas are often winged along by rowers clad in white, with rose-colored sashes, as if holiday array were abandoned to the vulgar, while the nobility kept up a vow of perpetual mourning. In most European towns authors are obliged carefully to avoid depicting the daily routine; for our customs, even in luxury, are rarely poetic; but in Venice nothing appears coarse; the canals, the boats, make pictures of the commonest events in life.

On the quay of the valleys you constantly encounter puppet shows, mountebanks and story-tellers; the last are worthy of remark. It is usually some episode from Tasso or Ariosto which they relate in prose, to the great admiration of their hearers, who sit round the speaker half-clad and motionless with curiosity; from time to time they purchase glasses of water, as wine is bought elsewhere, and this refreshment is all they take for hours, so strongly are their minds interested.

The narrator uses the most animating gestures; his voice is raised; he irritates himself; he grows pathetic; and yet one sees, all the while, that at heart he is perfectly unmoved. One might say to him as did Sappho to the Circean nymph, who, in perfect sobriety, was assuming fury:

"Bacchante—who art not drunk—what wouldst thou with me?"

Yet the lively pantomime of the south does not appear quite artificial; it is a singular habit handed down from the Romans and springing from quickness of disposition. A people so enslaved by pleasure may soon be alarmed by the dream of power in which the Venetian government is veiled. Never are soldiers seen there. If even a drummer appears in their comedies they are all astonishment; yet a state inquisitor needs but to show himself to restore order among thirty thousand people, assembled for a public fete. It were well if this influence was derived from a

respect for the laws; but it is fortified by terror of the secret means which may still be used to preserve the peace. The prisons are in the very palace of the doge, above and below his apartment.

The Lion's Mouth, into which all denunciations are thrown, is also here; the hall of trials is hung with black and makes judgment appear anticipating condemnation. The Bridge of Sighs leads from the palace to the state prison. In passing the canal how oft were heard the cries of "Justice! Mercy!" in voices that could be no longer recognized. When a state criminal was sentenced a bark removed him in the night by a little gate that opens on the water; he was taken some distance from the city to a part of the lagune where fishing is prohibited and there drowned; thus secrecy is perpetuated, even after death, not leaving the unhappy wretch a hope that his remains may inform those who loved him that he suffered and is no more.

When Lord Nevil and Corinne visited Venice, these executions had not taken place for nearly a century; but sufficient mystery still existed; and, though Oswald was the last man to interfere with the politics of foreign lands, he felt oppressed by this arbitrary power from which there was no appeal that seemed to hang over every head in Venice.

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